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UPLANDS AND LOWLANDS;

OR,

THREE CHAPTERS IN A LIFE.

BY

ROSE PORTER,

AUTHOR OF "SUMMER DRIFT-WOOD FOR THE WINTER FIRE;"
"FOUNDATIONS, OR CASTLES IN THE AIR."

NEW YORK:
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,
770 BROADWAY, COR. 9th STREET.

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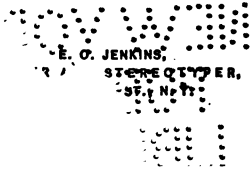

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TO THE

DEAR ONE IN A FOREIGN LAND

THIS SIMPLE STORY,

WOVEN OF TRUTH AND FICTION,

IS LOVINGLY INSCRIBED.

WOODSIDE COTTAGE,
JULY, 1872.

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CHAPTER FIRST.

CHILDHOOD.

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"O CHILD! O new-born denizen
Of life's great city! On thy head
The glory of the morn is shed,
Like a celestial benison!
Here at the portal thou dost stand,
And with thy little hand
Thou openest the mysterious gate
Into the future's undiscovered land."

—LONGFELLOW.

"While yet a child, and long before his time,
He had perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness,—and deep feelings had impressed
Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
And color so distinct, that on his mind
They lay like substances, and almost seemed
To haunt the bodily sense. He had received
A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
With these impressions would he still compare
All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
And, being still unsatisfied with ought
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images
Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams."

—WORDSWORTH.

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UPLANDS AND LOWLANDS.

I.

THIRTY years ago, the now populous town of W—— numbered scarcely more than a dozen homes, and they were so unlike the stately mansions which to-day border its streets, hardly does it seem fitting to frame their name in the same alphabet letters. Yet, the farm houses, scattered over the uplands, the cottages so rudely built, with unplaned boards, unpainted walls, were called then as now, by that little word—that briefest word of the good old Saxon tongue —*Home;* and, simple though they were, their story was just as sweet and as full a story of pure affections, happy hopes, and tender memories, as the stately mansions can tell; for hearts were the same then as

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now—hearts that loved and were glad, rejoicing in the sunshine—that loved and were sorrowful, mourning in the darkness.

During the year of 1840, through the long twilight of the summer evenings, sometimes quite into the night, when the moon was at its full, the sound of axe and hammer were heard from down by the lake-side, where Enoch Foster, with painstaking toil was building a little nest—the little nest which a winsome maiden had promised to fill with melody before the snow fell, and

> "The winter gently closed the lake's blue eye,
> And laid its shroud above dead summer's breast—"

a maiden, the sweetest, the fairest, Enoch thought, of all the singers in the garden of maidens; a maiden, whose soul was as pure as her eyes were blue—so pure, that Enoch, unlettered Enoch, whose hands were labor-marked, who had never read a line of poetry beyond the Bible verses in his life, called her, "My little Snow-flake"—whispered the

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name so softly, Faith's ear alone had heard it. "It belongs all to you, Enoch," the young girl would say, with a happy smile.

This sense of ownership, of individuality, does it not make the difference between a "pet name," and the long catalogue of endearing terms, used by fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends alike?

The names which end so often with the *ie* termination that the two letters seem to have caught a look of the fond affection which makes them "nicknames," very sweet oftentimes, very precious are these names, which now and then cling to us long after childhood has passed. But, they are not the "pet name," the name so tender, so sacred—the name spoken in whispered accent—the pet name of our life. Ah no! not many can utter it. Can more than one?

In this life of symbols, how the human touches the divine—the seen, the unseen—the present, the future! How we reach forward, and strive to express our earthly love

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after the pattern of the Heavenly, the Highest, whose promise to him who overcometh is, the "new name, which no man knoweth, saving he who receiveth it," and the Lord who gives it!

We have wandered from the little house building by the lake, where the sound of Enoch's hammer was heard until late in September—so late, that the summer green of maple and oak were touched with golden and crimson glory before the cottage was completed, the last nail driven, the last touch given, and, standing in the fading light of the ending day, Enoch gazed on his work accomplished.

"I never can forget this time," he said to himself, as he turned for one more look at the little cottage, which, on the morrow, he was to enter with another; strong man though he was, tears filled his eyes, and his voice had a strange, new tender note in it, as softly he added, "God help me to be worthy of her, and to make her happy." And then, he folded his arms over the little

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gate, while he lived it over—the idyl of his life—his love for Faith.

His thoughts went back to the little child with sunny face, and trusting hand-clasp, that had shook her curly head, refusing to go or come from the red school-house, with any one "but Enoch."

He remembered how those days were wont to seem to him gladsome as the music of the little brook, which played over its pebbly bed up among the hills; and then he thought of other days—days when the music in his heart was sweet as the cool rippling sound of water in the noontime heat. Later days he thought of, too—days when the early spring blossoms were budding in the woods, and, like a golden sunbeam, breaking in upon silvery moonlight, one day shone out brighter, fairer than any other—the time, when by the brook side they stood together, when she held in her hand the May blossoms he had gathered, when, for a minute, he thought she was going to let them float (the May blossoms)

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on the rippling waves of the brook into the lake. But something, no need to tell what, made the brook sing a louder, gladder song that day to Enoch, than ever before; and, the something — it was not the May blossoms floating on the dancing waves, for Faith, she did not cast the little things into the singing waters which, since then, had sparkled in smiles to Enoch, whether lit by sun or moonbeam rays.

The far-off note of a whip-poor-will, the sleepless bird, that tarries to sing while its mates rest, roused Enoch, and quickly he brushed the tears from his eyes, half ashamed, just as though the signs of his true manliness were marks of weakness. Only one more hasty look he gave toward the cottage, ere he went whistling up the road, wondering why the whip-poor-will's song (for the bird had flown near) sounded so much louder and sweeter that night than it was wont to do.

Faith's home was not far away; but the morning sun had not long flushed the

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eastern sky with rosy light, when Enoch started for the little brown house up among the hills; and, before noontime came, hand in hand, Enoch and Faith had entered the new home and begun the new life.

Like children they wandered about that day, Faith, with deft touch, giving something of grace and beauty to the clumsy furniture which Enoch had bought, with such satisfaction, in the neighboring town; and then came the preparing for the first meal—such a happy hour of preparation! when Enoch kindled the wood fire, which seemed to catch the spirit of their young life, it blazed and sparkled so—the cheery flame.

Meanwhile, Faith had unfolded the home-spun cloth of snowy whiteness, and spread the table, quite emptying the cupboard shelves of their array of plates, in her eagerness to have a table laden for Enoch; then, together they opened the basket of dainties, which her aunt had provided, and which Faith's own fingers had helped to fill. Never

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was butter so golden, bread so light and white, chickens so daintily browned, Enoch thought; nor tea so fragrant as that which Faith poured from the shining tea-pot into his cup, saying,

"See, the milk which auntie sent is cream!"

They forgot they were working people, in a work-day world, so light-hearted the young things were.

Just before the sun set, they stole, hand in hand again, through the little gate, going down to the lake-side, and on beyond, up to the brook, for, "I want to hear it sing to-day," Faith said.

Between the daylight and the dark, they came "home," Faith's hands laden with golden rod and purple asters, while Enoch carried branches of the brilliant frost-kissed maple leaves, which he had broken to please Faith, who loved so much the bright beautiful colors.

"They seem like my life, Enoch, all brightness," she whispered.

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And Enoch, he smiled in reply.

Half an hour later, they lit the lamp; far off its beams shone, for it twinkled like a little star, the light of that new home.

Faith's aunt, standing in the doorway of the brown house up among the hills saw it, and said.

"Look! the children have lit a light."

Farmer Jones' wife, who lived just across the lake, saw it too, and, as she bent to stir the fire, told her husband of it, saying, "The glimmer of light, over where Enoch Foster has pitched his tent, shines like a fire-fly to-night."

So the first day of their life together ended, but it was only the prelude to many glad days.

The sunshine that year was bright and clear all October; indeed November was far gone before the sunshine was mellowed into the tender misty light of the Indian-summer time; but when it gave place, as it did at last, to cold winter winds, and drifting snow fell, shutting Enoch and Faith away

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from the outside world, just as happy were they.

"Who do I want but you, Enoch?" Faith would ask, she was so utterly unlearned in modern love and life, this young girl reared among the hills.

But, we must not lengthen these introductory pages; enough, that to Enoch and Faith, the sunshine in their hearts stayed, while winter melted into spring; spring glided into summer, and summer on to autumn again.

"Just a year, little Snow-flake, since we came to our home," whispered Enoch to Faith, one cloudless morning.

"Such a happy, happy year!" was her whispered reply.

"I think I will stay with you all day," Enoch continued; so he stayed, and it was thus he came to be the first listener to the music which, next to Faith's voice, he loved better than any other music he ever heard, for at noontime that day, there came a little stranger into Enoch's

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home; a little soul, a new voice to make melody.

"Find him a name," Faith murmured, just as the twilight was stealing with soft shadows into the little room.

"Find him a name," and she looked toward the old Bible, which had been her mother's; and Enoch, he brought the book, holding it in his strong hand, while Faith with feeble touch turned the leaves, and rested her finger on a verse which read, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ."

So they gave him his name—Paul.

And now you know when and where his life began, the life of Paul Foster, of whom our story will tell; and, remember, it is not a tale of the imagination only, but the history of a life—a life, which helps to reveal the struggles, the aspirations, of other lives—lives, which we so often touch, and yet pass by.

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II.

WHAT are pictures but efforts to transfer to canvas the wondrous beauty of sky and land, ocean waves and mountain heights, clouds and sunshine, flowing rivers and flowery plains, or, perchance, the deeper beauty (because the spiritual) of the life of the affections.

Why do we stand, as thousands have stood, with hearts awed into silence, heads bowed in reverence before the representations of the Virgin Mother and Infant Child, the subject which makes so large a portion of the contents of picture galleries and church adornment? Why, but because they touch us with the electric touch of sympathy, appealing as they do, in the most familiar forms, to the memory and affections; for, however hardened and sin-

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marred the heart of man may be, *somewhere* there is hidden a tender place, which responds to thoughts of a mother, thoughts of childhood and innocence, home and love.

True were the words the English poet sang—the poet, not over much given to tenderness, "To the man who has had a mother, all women are sacred for her sake."

"Holy-family groups," (a well-chosen, beautiful title it is, of a beautiful subject,) we are wont to call these pictures, which are so multiplied in variety, and yet all have the same central light.

Enoch Foster had never seen a painting of the Madonna and Child; indeed, he had but a dim knowledge of when or where lived and died Raphael, Fra Angelico, and the cluster of names which make the old-time artist band shine like jewels in Italy's crown of kingship in the kingdom of art. A faint, misty knowledge of long names, stumbled over occasionally, during the one

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or two winters' schooling which he had had in the neighboring town of M——, such a brief schooling time that mere peep-holes into other lands and peoples had it given him; and Faith knew scarce more. The Bible was the only wide-opened window they had, through which to look on treasures of poetry, or word-pictures, which in their vividness rival the glowing canvas. And yet, the living picture of Faith, holding in loving tenderness the baby Paul, pillowing his little head on her bosom, nestling his tiny hand into her own, was to Enoch a picture as true, as beautiful, as any ever caught and held by artist's brush —a picture, which wakened holy thoughts and aspirations, that other word for prayer.

And Faith, sitting hour after hour, busy with spinning-wheel, giving one look to distaff, the next, a longer look, toward the little cradle where baby slept, and then back again to thread and distaff, was weaving all the time in her heart, a poem as

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sweet, as true, as any poet ever sang, though the words of the lullaby she softly hummed, were only very simple words. So it is, the dear All-Father never shuts any of His children, however humble their homes may be, away from pictures and from poems, but scatters them so freely, they are everywhere, like the flowers which spring up in early summer, till "you scarce can see the grass for flowers."

Nevertheless, we must seek with wide-open eyes if we would find them — the flowers, the pictures, and the poems.

Guarded by the watchful love of father and mother, Paul's early childhood, was beautiful as a pleasant dream.

They thought him so wonderful those first days; every smile that flitted across the baby face, Faith would treasure in her memory to tell Enoch, when at nightfall he came home.

"What can he be thinking about, Enoch? she would ask. "In his sleep he smiles."

But Enoch could not tell; for,

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'Who can tell what a baby thinks?
Who can follow the gossamer links
By which the manikin feels his way
Out from the shore of the great unknown,
. . . . into the light of day?"

As the months numbered years, more and more wonderful the unfolding of the child's life seemed. It was a summer day when he uttered the first word, so quickly followed by others, that to Faith, her baby's language seemed complete, when almost on one's fingers could his list of words be counted.

During those early years, Paul's companions were his father and mother; his playthings, treasures of acorn-cups, shining stones found by the lake, flowers from the meadows, and mosses from the woods.

Like a child herself, Faith appeared, while playing with little Paul; sometimes it was difficult to tell which laugh were the gladder, mother's or child's, when in the long afternoons of the summer time, she would leave her spinning-wheel idle, and wander about with him in the sunshine; or,

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a shady place they would find on the beach, where they could make gardens for Enoch to see.

Those fairy-like, miniature gardens in the smooth sands, which they walled round with shining stones and white pebbles, were Paul's great delight. For trees, they found plume-tufted mosses; flowers they never lacked. They found, too, curious fungi, of brilliantly dyed yellow, or sober brown; lichens, of varied hue and grotesque outline, and dainty moss-cups, that opened like little bells, little cups, where dew-drops would linger long past morning; indeed, there were no end to the treasures Faith and Paul found.

The boy inherited his mother's love for color; while still a baby, he would clap his tiny hands with delight, when Enoch brought home a cluster of the scarlet cardinal blossoms, or branch of delicate pink azalia. As he grew older, a strange instinctive appreciation, or sympathy, he seemed to have, too, with the mystical meanings of color;

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for the violets, which so thickly starred the pasture meadows in spring and early summer, always made him quiet and gentle, as though the violet hue of the modest little flower had been caught from the Beyond, caught even from the stone precious amid the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem —the stone, whose ray is violet—the amethyst; and later, when the child wandered through the same meadows—gemmed no longer with violets, but gay with buttercups, dandelions, and daisies—his mood was joyous and frolicsome. Faith wondered, in her quiet way, why it was that the flowers so differently affected Paul; but, for all her wonderment, she found no explanation.

Every year new pleasures opened. A great discovery the boy made one day, which was, that on the smooth, flat, stones he found on the beach, he could, with pointed bits of stone, make pictures of trees and flowers. Patiently he worked for days, striving to make crooked lines look like a tree, and when partially successful, his

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joy was unbounded; but, brighter and fuller of happiness than almost any day of his childhood, ever stood out clearly defined in his memory, the hour when his little hands pressed, from a cluster of berries, crimson drops—drops which did not lose their color when, with his mother's help, he laid them on to his drawing of a tree, in tiny red specks, exclaiming, "'Cause they looks like apples, mother." And father and mother were hardly less delighted than Paul himself, with that first picture—the crooked tree, with red specks for apples.

In the corner of the room behind his mother's spinning-wheel, the child kept his treasures—the little hoard of smooth slate stones, sharp bits, and curious shaped leaves, which he saved to copy when winter came. Pointing toward the corner, he would tell the few neighbors who came now and then for a chat with Faith:

"Behind there I make my pictures."

But his mother was wont to lay her hand on the boy's curly head, while she softly said:

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"I think it is in here the child makes them."

Well, they were both right.

The cottage was so far from the red school-house, that Enoch yielded to Faith's desire, and consented that the mysteries and difficulties of the little Primer should be conquered at home. So, Paul's first lessons were learned close by his mother's side.

There were other lessons learned, too—harder lessons than the Primer taught; for temptation found its way even into Enoch and Faith's humble home. And the first dark shadow that fell on Paul's life was from sin. Yet, that shadow became a stepping-stone, from which the boy of six summers looked off into the land where no shadows lurk; for, he was by his mother's side then, and gently, tenderly, she led the little child to the Saviour, who understands the heart of a child better even than a mother.

It was by asking Christ to make him "a

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good boy," that Paul was lifted out of temptation, just as we, if we ask Him, will be lifted above the sins, the misdoings, of our later years, till they become "stepping-stones" — look-off places from which we catch glimpses of the sinless land, shining brighter from their very contrast to our darkness.

Before Paul had known the snows of seven winters, the flowers of seven summers, the little Primer had been read and re-read, and of a Sabbath afternoon, sitting on Enoch's knee, with one little dimpled hand nestled into Faith's, the other pointing to the words in the old Bible, father, mother and child turned the pages together; little Paul spelling out letter by letter the words new to him, his face all aglow when he came to one too familiar to spell. It was thus they came to read on the Sabbath afternoons, oftenest, from John's Epistle. for,

"It makes Paul so happy" the mother would say, "to find the words he knows,

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and *Love* he always calls by its right name" —*Love*, the word which shines through those chapters, like shells upon the ocean shore, which the tide has drifted up into sunlit places.

"He never will forget that word—love," Faith was wont to whisper, as, the reading ended, the child carried the Bible back to its place upon the little stand; and he never did.

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III.

THE years that had come ladened with strength for Paul, which had flushed his cheeks with the ruddy color of health, the years which had brought thoughts into the child's heart, had taken something away from his mother, What was it? Not the sweet smile and gentle voice—not the loving welcome which ever greeted Enoch, when, tired from work, at evening he came home—not the warm sympathy ever ready for Paul; these had not grown less, but, rather more. The change was something which had come very quietly and gradually —so gradually, all the note Paul took of it was, that his mother no longer went with him to the woods or lake-shore, but sent him to play alone—that she no longer sat through the morning hours, singing by the

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spinning-wheel as had been her wont; but, while he puzzled over the line of figures on the slate his father had brought from the village store, or strove to master the long column in the spelling-book, she would lean her head wearily back on the cushioned rocking-chair — and sometimes her eyes would be closed.

This was all Paul, the child, noticed. But Enoch, who ever watched Faith with the quick discernment of love, he saw the rosy flush in her cheek fade into faint pink —and, the pink, it too faded away at last; he saw the hands of his wife grow thinner and whiter, day by day, (the hands always so small, spite their familiarity with household tasks,) and yet, Faith ever smiled when he asked her—

"What's the matter with you, my little Snow-flake?"

—smiled and replied:

"I will be stronger when the spring comes."

But spring came — the honeysuckles

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round the porch were laden with flowers, the robins and the blue-birds chirped to one another all day long, while the May blossoms were "fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonderful sweetness," and the flower "children, lost in the woods, and covered with leaves in their slumber," were waking up in their nooks in the maple grove, were shining like stars in the pine forest, while the meadows were gemmed with anemones and violets—still Faith, she was not stronger, and Enoch could not silence the foreboding dread whispering in his heart, that Faith—Faith, his young wife, was slipping with every passing day away from him.

So it happened, one morning, instead of going to the mill, he followed the path leading to the village, hardly defining to himself what his errand was, he so shrank from acknowledging it—even to his own heart.

"What brings Enoch Foster to town this time of day?" old widow Brown queried,

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as she saw him passing; "he hain't been to the post office, nor to the store—deary me, if he ain't turning in to Doctor Miller's gate."

Yes, Enoch had opened the gate, and was standing with his hand on the knob of the door which led into the Doctor's dingy little office.

He did not open the door for a moment, but lingered to read over once or twice the brief sign, "Doctor Peter Miller." Then he smiled, for his thoughts turned to little Paul, and how pleased he would be with the bright yellow and red letters; and then his mind came back to why he stood there.

A cheery voice called,

"Come in, Mr. Foster," and Enoch entered.

"I hope no one is sick up your way," the Doctor asked.

"Well, no," replied Enoch. "Not exactly sick; but, Faith, my wife, she is growing kind of thin, and pale—feeling sort of tired all the time, and I thought if you were pass-

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ing it might be as well for you to give us a call."

Then Enoch began hastily to talk of other things; the crops, the mill, the new families that had moved to W——; but all the time the dull pain was aching, throbbing in his heart; for it had made his anxieties for Faith so fearfully real—this coming to the Doctor—this telling some one else that she was not well—in a moment, it seemed to have crushed all hope, that perhaps she soon would be better, out of his heart, making his fears dread realities.

Doctor Miller was an old man. For thirty years or more he had been going and coming among the homes scattered the country-side over.

"A shrewd far-seeing old man; close to drive a bargain, but mighty kind of heart withal," the village people said.

Instantly he understood Enoch's anxiety, and the effort he made to conceal it. So, with the innate delicacy which is hidden sometimes behind the roughest exterior,

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the old man made no further allusion to why Enoch had come, beyond the brief response, "I will see to it," which he made as Enoch turned back before closing the door to say,

"You may as well come round to-day, Doctor."

A minute later, Enoch was walking through the sunshine once more; but, the sunshine had all faded out of his heart. He heard the birds singing jubilant songs as he passed from the village into the woods; but, to him, the music had died out of their songs.

Meanwhile, Faith, with little Paul's assistance, had finished the small share of morning work which Enoch had left undone—such a small share, that it often made her eyes fill with tears—the thoughtful tenderness with which her husband anticipated her every want.

"Push my chair into the doorway, Paul, dear," she said, "where I can watch you while you play."

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She was sitting there, with the child's toys scattered about the step, when the sound of approaching wheels broke the stillness like a discordant note. Away ran Paul down the narrow walk to see who was coming. He was swinging on the gate when Doctor Miller came in sight. The boy watched his approach with no interest except the mere pleasure of seeing some one pass, till he heard the Doctor call "Whoa!" to his horse, and saw him proceed to alight from his gig, and fasten the long reins in a firm knot round the old maple tree. What could it mean? Half frightened, half curious, Paul ran eagerly to tell his mother; shouting even before he reached her, "Mother, mother, a strange man is coming here!" and before Faith could reply, Doctor Miller was by her side.

The keen glance of a man so well used as he, to study faces, detected in a moment the truth Enoch had striven not to perceive. He was startled to find Faith was already walking too close to the boundary line

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which divides earth from heaven, for any skill of his to dispel the shadows which were gathering around Enoch Foster's home.

Doctor Miller was not a weak man. He was not wont to shrink from speaking the truth. Many and many were the times when unflinchingly he said, "I cannot help you—medicine will do no good." And yet, it seemed to him impossible to say those words to Faith. Perhaps it was something in the sweet face, in the gentle voice; or perchance, something in the sight of the child's playthings, scattered about his mother's feet, or in the memory of Enoch, as he stood before him, saying, "No, not sick exactly, but Faith, my wife, she is growing kind of thin and pale—feeling sort of tired all the time." Whatever the cause, the old man was long silent; but Faith read the words he did not utter, in the troubled look which came over his face. Gently she said,

"Paul, go to the meadow and gather flowers."

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Reluctantly the boy obeyed; for he did not like to leave his mother alone with a stranger. As Paul went, the old man and the young woman watched the little figure till quite out of sight, and then it was Faith who broke the silence, saying, very softly:

"You need not fear to tell me, Doctor. I know it. Every day I am growing weaker. Every day it comes nearer the time when I must leave them."

It was still again, till presently a few more words she said — words in a very low voice, to which the Doctor made no reply beyond a whispered, "God bless you, child." And then he passed down the narrow walk, through the gate—brushing away hastily the mist which had gathered before his eyes, for it made the bright morning light seem dim to the old man; and, on his coat sleeve — his rough home-spun coat— there glistened something which shone like a jewel. Yet, it was only a tear.

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IV.

SO, Faith was left alone, face to face with the truth, How could she meet it? How could she think of going away from Enoch—from little Paul? How could she leave them when they needed her so? Surely God—the God who had given them to her—surely, surely He would let her stay. And then, all alone, she met it—the verse, "Not my will, but thine be done." Met it, and learned to say it alone (as every one that calls Him my Father must), alone with Christ.

When Paul came, an hour later, Faith greeted the child with a smile, as he called, "See, mother, I have brought you ever so many flowers!" And she kissed him. Never in all his life long did Paul forget that smile and kiss.

While the sun was still high above the

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horizon, Enoch left his work and turned homeward, no longer able to combat with the restless longing to know whether Doctor Miller had been. When he reached the cottage Faith was sitting where she had sat in the morning; but then, the sunshine had been about her, and now shadows were plentiful in the valley—only the hill-tops were glory-touched.

By and by, little Paul was sent for the second time that day, to play by himself. "Go swing on the garden gate," his father said—and they were left alone, Faith and Enoch, sitting in their humble door-way—her head resting on his shoulder, her hand, the little thin white hand, held in the firm clasp of his strong hand—and, while the twilight shadows deepened about them,—the tender, pitiful twilight—she whispered to him—that she must go—softly adding: "It will not be for long Enoch, God will send for you and Paul to come soon." And Enoch, he did not speak—but, he lifted her in his arms—he held her close—his little

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Snow-flake—as thought *he* could keep her from fading—slipping away.

It had grown dark in the room; dark and cold.

Paul returning from his play lingered on the door-step; it was all so still, it frightened him, and suddenly he called aloud—

"Father where are you, I cannot see you?"

A minute afterwards, Enoch lit a light, stirred the dying embers of the smouldering fire into a bright blaze, and Paul was no longer afraid.

Then father and child prepared the simple evening meal—the meal untouched save by the boy.

Thus it is wont to be; amid the hours of deepest heart-anguish, some voice calls us back into the daily routine of life. Some light must be lit—some fire stirred. Well, it is better so.

Only one verse Enoch read that night from the old Bible, for something choked his utterance, blinded his eyes; the verse

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was, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' And the prayer which followed, scarce more than a sentence was it—just the cry, "Thy will be done; Lord help us to say it, for Christ's sake, Amen." And then, not waiting to close the open Bible, he passed through the cottage-door, out into the darkness of the night.

Paul's childish heart was full of wonderment, and half afraid too, but the soothing, loving words of his mother soon comforted him, and tired from a day of such strange excitement, hardly did the little head touch the pillow, before the child slept.

It was late when Enoch returned, but Faith was waiting for him, and with the gentle grace of love, with which a woman can interpret the heart of him she trusts, she did not speak to him of where he had been, of what he had suffered out in the dark, she only said,

"Enoch dear," did you hear Paul's words when he stood on the door-step, when he

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called, 'Father, where are you, I cannot see you?' Do you remember? You lit the light. Our little child calling out to his earthly father, sure the light would be lit, has touched my heart so, — and," Faith's voice grew lower,—"can we not trust our Heavenly Father, just as little Paul trusts you?"

"Snow-flake—my little Snow-flake—" it was all the reply Enoch made, but, in the room, the still room, a great sob sounded.

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V.

QUIET, peaceful days were those that followed, for, while the shadow of a near parting rested over Enoch Foster's home, while the chill mists from the cold dark river were thickening around Faith, not only she, but Enoch too, seemed almost to hear with mortal ear, so clearly it sounded to the spiritual, the whisper, "Fear thou not, for when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." And the whisper made Faith, timid woman though she was, not afraid to go.

So they stood together, hand in hand, with little Paul beside them, down by the chill river-bank—hearkening as the storm-tossed mariner on Eastern sea hearkens to catch the mellow far-away note of the bells, which the legend tells us, ring never so

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loudly as when the waves are dashing over the cities buried beneath the waters. Faint, very faint were the echoes Enoch heard, and little Paul, scarce a strain he caught; but Faith, she heard not echoes, but truly songs.

"Why do you smile?" Paul would ask, and the mother she could not tell him why, and yet she smiled.

As Faith grew weaker, Enoch went no more to the mill, but staid about home all day, never going farther away than to the clearing down by the lake, from where Paul could call him in a minute with one sound upon the horn which hung in the doorway.

Those days Faith talked much with Paul, of where she was going, till the child became so familiar with the Heavenly Home, it did not seem to him like a "land that is very far off;" and, when too weary to talk, his mother would bid him read to her, from the Revelation chapters, which tell of the city where they need "neither the sun nor

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the moon to shine, for the Lamb is the light of it;" where "the nations of them that are saved shall walk; where there shall be no night, nor sorrow, crying or any more pain;" and then she would find for him David's song, of "green pastures and still waters," or Isaiah's page, where the child read, "of the King in His beauty," and the quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, where the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, and where the inhabitants shall not say, "I am sick," where the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquities.

As Paul ceased reading, she was wont to murmur softly, "Forgiven, for Christ's sake; always remember little Paul, it is for Christ's sake."

Often Enoch would linger on the doorstep, for in the stillness of the summer day, broken only by hum of insect, fluttering leaves, and the rippling of the brook, he could distinctly hear the child's voice, and

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sometimes that other dearer voice, saying, "Think of it, Paul dear; mother is going to this beautiful home, to be with God our Father, Christ and the angels—" and then, she would bid him say after her the verse, "God is love."

A life-long effect those hours had upon the boy's mind; he never passed beyond their influence, and from them, with the underlying love of beauty, which from babyhood his mother almost unconsciously had been developing, he seemed to catch the inspiration, not only to perceive the beautiful, but the longing to share it with others: yet as a child, *words* came not easily to Paul, (neither did they when he grew into manhood,) and perhaps this very lack of power to express his feelings, served to intensify the desire to bring them out in picture forms, so that others might *see*, what he could not *tell*.

Many an hour when his mother slept, with flushed face and eagerly tremulous fingers, did he bend over the little slate,

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which he covered oftener with lines than with figures those days, thinking, "Mother will like it when she wakes;" and Faith, mother-like, straightway comprehended the child's endeavour; she could see, (as a mother's eye can,) where no one else could, what he meant when he pointed to the lines, saying:

"See, that's the green pasture place, and there's the still waters."

Thus the soul of the artist was unfolding in that simple home of Enoch Foster's; but only the mother knew it. Well was it her loving eyes could not fathom the years to come, when that soul would struggle and beat against the bars of adverse circumstances.

Those summer days, when Paul sat by his mother's side, reading to her of the Home Beyond—when he had not learned the verse, that so often creeps in like a sad refrain when we think of heaven, murmuring, "There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest;" shutting away

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that other fuller, dearer verse, the comfort-promise Christ gave, "Where I am, there ye shall be also," always were remembered by Paul, as we remember the calm days that follow wild storm on ocean beach, when we linger on the shore to gather the sea flowers of fairy texture and delicate hue; when the yellow sands are strewn with shells of varied tint and marvellous form; when we go home, laden with treasures, sometimes almost unmindful that our treasures were born mid storms.

All the time, it was drawing nearer and nearer—the parting day. Enoch knew it (so did Faith). Knew it so well that he never lifted his eyes towards the purple hills at sunrise, never looked at the deepening shadows creeping over the hills at nightfall, without seeming to hear a voice murmuring, "At even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning," the call may come bidding her go. And yet, the last day came, and they did not think it would be the last—such a beautiful day;

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a day cloudless as the one on which he brought her to his home. And, she left him—just as she came to him then—smiling.

They never thought she was going; they never thought that they were the last words. Those few words, asking, "Paul, little Paul, kiss mother—Enoch, kiss me;" for she smiled—smiled and closed her eyes as though to sleep. And they did not know, neither husband nor child, that an angel was there. They did not hear the rustling of his wings; they did not hear the "still small voice" whispering, "So He giveth His beloved sleep."

But, by and by they knew; and words are not needed to tell of the after hours, for they are no strangers those angels of life and death, in these earthly nests of ours which we call homes.

They made her grave by the brook where the waters sing all day long. Sing at night, too; where the flowers open first in spring. And then, they came back to the desolate cottage—the father and the child.

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VI.

A MONTH later, Enoch and Paul stood (where they had been so often) in the twilight, by the side of the lonely grave.

On the morrow they were going far away westward. Yet, Enoch knew he would not escape his sorrow by thus turning from his desolate home. He knew his heart would cry out just as loudly for Faith, in a strange place as there; where every stone, every tree and bush, seemed laden with memories of her. Still, he thought (just as so many sorrow-stricken souls have thought before,) he and Paul could bear it better elsewhere. So they were going, though Faith's aunt (their only relative) had shook her head in disapproval of the plan, saying,

"What will become of the boy in them

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strange parts, if you was took sick, or anything?"

But Enoch was strong; he was young, too, and never felt a fear for himself, as he put aside Miss Fowler's objections, and those of Farmer Jones's wife, whose kind motherly heart yearned over little Paul; so much, that she came one day to say:

"If you will trust him with me, Mr. Foster, I'll set as much store by him as if he was my own."

"Thank you, kindly," Enoch answered, "but, only God can separate me from Paul; I never will leave the boy till *He* calls."

"Well," responded Mrs. Jones, "leastways, you 'll let me have an eye to your, and the child's fixings for winter, before you go;" which request Enoch gratefully accepted.

But when she came to look over their little stock of clothes, she found the impress of another hand—a hand, tenderer than hers, that had anticipated every want of husband and child for months to come.

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Mrs. Jones (as she told her husband afterwards), "shed more tears over them things, than ever they were worth," and yet, they were not many; the old fashioned blue chest which had belonged to Faith's mother, held them all—held, too, the few treasures that were to be taken to the western home. The old Bible, several books which had been Faith's—a blue ribbon she used to wear—the little work-basket, just as she had left it, with spools half empty, with the shining needles still in the last bit of work her dear hands had held, a little stocking for Paul—these, with one or two other things, valueless, except for tender memories, were the treasures Enoch took.

The old rocking-chair, with its faded chintz cushions, against which the pale face had rested, the weary head had been wont to lean, had been sent with the spinning-wheel to Miss Fowler, while the other furniture, the new family who were to call the cottage "home" had bought.

Paul's "precious things," took more room

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than his father's, for, Enoch could not say no! though Mrs. Jones did remonstrate once or twice, as the child brought some new package, asking: "What do you want with such rubbish, Paul?"

"Let him take all we can find room for," answered Enoch, in the boy's stead, as he knelt before the open chest, and made a place in an odd corner for Paul's bag of smooth stones and pebbles, which he knew the child prized because he had found them with his mother. The primer and the old spelling book, they had to go to—and the little slate, carefully folded in paper, that the lines which covered it, might not be rubbed off, for,

"You know father," Paul said, in a voice too low for Mrs. Jones to hear, "that's the picture I made, the day before mother went—and called it the green pasture, and the still water place, you remember."

Yes, Enoch remembered.

At last the packing was accomplished, the chest locked and corded, and the card

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which Enoch had printed in large letters nailed on.

Then Mrs. Jones went home, promising to come again before dark, and Enoch had an errand down in the village—so Paul was left alone.

The child climbed on the chest and began to amuse himself by spelling out the direction, "Tompkinsville." What kind of a place would it be, he wondered? Thompkinsville—he read the name over and over, and then, suddenly, he burst into passionate weeping, he did not even hear Mrs. Jones return—did not know she was there, till the kind-hearted woman had lifted him in her arms, and bade him tell her, "what was the matter." But Paul could not tell—he only sobbed more pitifully. It was long before he grew quiet, and the quietness was sadder than his loud grief. Not till he heard his father's approaching footsteps, did he leave the shelter of Mrs. Jones'. arms, bravely struggling to hide his sorrow, because as he said, "Mother always smiled when father

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came." And yet, half an hour after, he was chattering merrily, seeming all-forgetful of the storm that had shaken his frame, just as nature seems to forget and covers the very place where sweetest flowers faded and died, with new buds and blossoms—just as the sunshine hardly waits for the thunder-clouds to roll over horizon-ward ere it breaks through, in shining beams, which dance and play amid the cloud-shadows, as smiles amid childhood's tears. Yet, spite the *seeming* forgetfulness, does the child ever cease to remember the tears he shed? the earth to mourn its faded flowers? the sunshine to woo back its clouds?

"You'll find a package of ginger-cakes on the table," said Mrs. Jones, "I fetched 'em over, thinking Paul might like 'em on his journey to-morrow—though I'll see you in the morning afore ye start;" and again she left them. It was only a little while later, when Enoch and Paul went to the grave.

The next morning, while the dawn was

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still gray, the rumbling of wheels roused here and there a sleeper, as the wagon which carried Enoch, Paul, and the blue chest, jolted over the hills. Enoch never turned once to look at the cottage — he just gazed straight on — but Paul did not lose sight of it, till the hills shut it away; the home of his babyhood—the home of his early childhood, from which he went forth that day, leaving it behind him.

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VII.

"WHAT is on the other side, father?' Paul had been wont to ask, looking up at the hills, which encircled the village of W——, the lake and the cottage, and his father's reply,

"Other towns, larger than W——, where many more people live, other hills and lakes, meadows and brooks,"—had been only half-comprehended, for like a child, the boy *felt* as though the barrier line which he saw, must edge the world. Not till the night before, when he had spelt out letter by letter, the name of the new place to which they were going, had Paul realized, that he was soon to answer his own oft-asked question, "What is on the other side?" by looking over, to see.

Unconsciously, he was in intimate sym-

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pathy with the hills; like companions they seemed to him—great protective friends, that always in winter and summer, were looking at him, and always looked kindly.

Even before he could speak distinctly, and long before he understood the words, his mother had taught him the verse, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people."

Paul's intense love of color, made them very dear also, for it was the hill tops which caught the first violet and rosy hues of dawn, that were crowned with sunbeams, while the valley was still in shadow; on them, too, the golden light lingered, even when it was nightfall down below.

Very wonderful the mountains seemed to Paul, and unformed as his child-mind was, in that knowledge which makes a reason for the mysteries of nature, (a reason, which alas often robs it of its mystical charm,) firmly he believed "some where," up among the hills, were lurking places, where after the early morning hours the sun-rise glories

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hid, not to come out again till just before the gloaming time.

Sitting one summer day on the door-step, leaning his head against his mother's knee, while with light touch her fingers stroked his dark hair, he had asked:

"Do the beautiful colors come out at night and morning, mother? To kiss the earth, just as you do me, when I go to sleep, and when I wake up?"

And then, mother and child had fallen into a quiet talk, the memory of which stayed with Paul all his life long. There had been one of those sudden showers, which come so often in the hill countries, one can scarce tell from where. It was over in half-an-hour, at least the sun was shining, and the rain clouds had blown up northward. "But look!" the boy had exclaimed. "See, it is growing right out of Round Top—the rainbow—coming right out of the ground, and going up into the sky, just a little way, and then down again into the mountain, oh, if I could find out where it grows, wouldn't

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I have beautiful colors for my pictures!"—and the child had planned for the time when he would be a big man, like his father, and could go and "dig down deep enough to find the rainbow's roots."

Presently his mother had softly told him, the old-time story of the Bow of Promise; afterward, trying in her simple way to explain, that it was only rain-drops, and the sun shining on them that made the beautiful arch in the heavens. But, Paul had shook his curly head at the idea of such beautiful bands of color being rain-drops, and said, "Why, mother, rain is nothing but the sky a-crying, and things don't cry, except they are hurt or naughty, does they?" Gently, his mother had replied, that "the sky did not cry when the rain fell—though, perhaps"—and in Faith's eyes a far away look had come, it was the naughty things done on the earth, that made the earth cry, and its tears, if they were sorry tears, because people had done wrong, went up to the blue sky in mist-drops, which formed a

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little cloud, that whispered, "Forgive the wrong the people have done;" and, then, the blue sky whispered, "I forgive—go back to earth you little tear-drops of repentance, in gentle dews, freshening the opening flowers, in soft showers, nourishing the grain and ripening fruits, in plenteous rains, filling the empty brooks among the hills, that they may replenish the lakes and rivers, and give drink to thirsty men and cattle." And Paul had listened to his mother, as children listen to some wonderful elfin tale, of green-wood fairy, or water-nymph; never knowing till years after, that her words were a life-allegory. For, is not life sending up to heaven all the time, misdeeds, ill-spent minutes—trifling words—sending them up with the cry, "Father, forgive;" and does he not forgive? So freely, so fully, that the very wrong deeds when repented of, come back in blessings, whispering, "Even the wrath of man shall praise Him." "To whom much is forgiven, he loveth much." And yet, ever these words are echoed,

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with those other words, "Go, and sin no more."

So it was, (as it often is,) memories of the mother, so early called from him, kept bright the golden thread of Paul's life, for the impressions of childhood, though often dimmed, often forgotten for months and years, never died out of his heart, because God held that golden thread, though Paul, turning away from God for a time, sadly tarnished and tangled it; yet always, though for a little while but by a single cord, a gossamer cord, he was bound to the Father, whom his mother had taught him to call, by that fullest of Fatherhood names—"God is love."

This talk of the rain-drops was months before Faith "went up to the blue sky," months before Paul and Enoch drove over the hills in the early morning—going forth to seek a new home.

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VIII.

THE wagon in which they began their journey was known, for miles around, as the "Mail Bag," which went on one day to the neighboring town of M——, and returned the next, bringing the little news of the outside world which found its way into W——, through the columns of one or two semi-weekly newspapers.

These, with a few letters, and an occasional passenger, made up "the load, mostly," as old Phil, the driver and proprietor of the conveyance, used to say.

Phil was a rough, weather-beaten looking man, somewhere near seventy years of age, whose face was lined with marks of care: whose eyes were deep set, under brows shaggy and gray; he was somewhat stern in manner, but with a heart so kindly, chil-

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dren and animals always loved him, spite his now and then gruff voice.

He carried on quite a business in the way of "peddling," and Paul had known and watched for "old Phil's" coming every spring and autumn that he could remember, for it always had been an hour of pleasant excitement to the boy, when the familiar rap sounded at the door, and Phil entered, holding up some bright knots of yarn for Paul's mittens or socks, or a winter cap, or broad-brimmed straw hat, as the season might be, and asked, in a shrill voice, "What 'ill ye have in my line to-day, Miss Foster," and then, even when Faith's reply had been, "We do not need a new thing, Phil," it had been his wont to come into the little kitchen, and untie the mysterious packs, the contents of which he so delighted to display.

Thus it had come about, that much of Faith's simple shopping had been selected from old Phil's stock.

He never went away without fumbling in his coat-pockets, which Paul thought un-

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fathomable, from the generous supplies which came forth, of, as Phil used to say, "goodies for the boy."

This was not all the old man brought to the cottage, for, in his way, he was something of a thinker, and though unlearned in the wisdom of the schools, he was well-versed in heart experience; thus he never came and went without leaving with Faith, some words of counsel, more lasting than the "goodies" which so pleased Paul.

Phil did not speak for some time after he had exchanged good-morning greetings with Enoch and Paul, recognizing that *silence* was the kindest sympathy he could show, as they drove away from the cottage gate. Indeed, not till they reached the village; not till they had passed Doctor Miller's, and were nearing the low, rambling tavern at the end of the street, did he break the quiet, by giving his whip a loud snap, and encouraging the lazy horses into a brisk trot, by his sharply uttered, "Go along, old

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fellers." Reining up before the inn-door, loudly he called:

"Halloo, I say. Any folks for me, this mornin'? Step along smart-like if they be; we hain't no time to waste."

His voice roused a sleepy dog, who began a vigorous barking, and brought to the door the red-faced innkeeper, who had a letter or so to send; following him, came two passengers, lumber-men, who, as they said, were going off, "whar clearins warn 't so plenty as round W——." "Step in spry," was Phil's welcome to them; and then the whip snapped again, and with another, "Gee-up, old fellers—lively now, I say, lively," the horses started at a quick pace, and in half an hour the quiet village, nestled so safely in the valley among the hills, was far behind them.

The road led for some time through the woods, where it was almost dark still, so densely the pine trees grew.

Paul wondered, when they came out into an open place for a few minutes, to find the

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sun was high in the heavens, and shining brightly.

"See, father," he said, "it is real daylight." Enoch only replied by a low, "yes," though he roused himself, for the boy's sake, to look round.

True enough, it was daylight, and something in its brightness, contrasted with the shadows of the forest through which they had just passed, made Enoch close his eyes with a vivid sense of that *something* which we all feel, when, after a great sorrow or change in our lives, we are brought suddenly face to face with the same daylight, the same glad sunshine, blooming flowers, and singing birds, that used to be before we had known darkness.

It is not that we wish a sober light to rest on the world, a plaintive note to sound in the bird-songs, or a drooping grace to come into the flowers, to suit our altered mood; only, it seems so hard at first, to find everything the same.

The ascent of the hill began soon, a steep,

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rough way, so shut in by forest trees, that only glimpses of the blue sky were framed in by the massive evergreen boughs, through which, here and there, flitting, dancing sun-rays stole in and out.

It was almost noon-time before they neared the summit of Round Top. "A reg'lar mountin," Phil called it, and "an awful hard pull for the hosses. But we are nigh to the top," he said, smiling at Paul, as he asked:

"Do ye see them hay-stacks, and that 'er' house over yender? Thar's the place whar we stop to rest a bit, and take a bite of refreshment for man and beast."

Paul had climbed over into the front seat by Phil, whose words, "nigh to the top," wakened the mysterious impression of the wonders he pictured on "the other side," which now the child thought would speedily be revealed. He crept close to Phil, and nestled his little hand into the folds of the dear coat the old man wore, gently pulling Pa's sleeve, while he repeated the question an oft so often asked his father, saying

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"What 's on the other side, Phil? We will see soon, won't we?"

"Gracious me!" replied Phil, "thar 's nothin' uncommon to see, jist a plain, and then another hill to climb; and, jist so we must travel along till night-fall. What did ye reckon ye was to see, hey?"

"Oh, I don't know," answered Paul, hesitatingly, "but I thought—I thought—there was a place up on top of the mountains, where the beautiful things come out from, and, father said, there was lots of folks and houses on the other side."

"So thar is, boy, over beyon', lots of people, and lots of houses, but most on 'em are the same kind o' folks as ye seed down in W——; as for beautiful things, what do ye want more, child, than ye 've got now?"

And the old man looked about him, at the great pine trees and moss-covered rocks, with a satisfied nod.

"But," continued Paul, "must we go on climbing up hills all the time?"

It was only a child's question; they were

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only rough men who heard it, — and yet, there fell a silence over them all, and Paul, though but a boy of ten years, was even then, a close student of faces, and instinctively he felt he must not push his question farther. But, he looked with a strange interest at Phil, whose keen eyes were twinkling and shining, from the thoughts back of them; then he turned to his father, whose face was grave, who seemed looking far off, as though he saw something beyond the hills; he glanced also toward the lumbermen, just as the younger of them gave a low whistle, and smiled a smile which seemed to say, "Who fears the hills to climb?" — just as the older man sighed. Paul was grown up before he read the definition of spirit beauty, either in man's or woman's face, which calls it, "one-fifth expression of thought, four-fifths of feeling," and yet, though he never clearly defined why, straightway he linked those words with a memory of the faces of the silent men, after he had asked the unanswered question,

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"Must we go on climbing up hills all the time?"

Was it possible, that the child's eye caught a gleam of beauty, spirit beauty, on those weather-beaten, sun-browned faces, and was that the reason he never forgot them? Why not?

They were fishermen, tent menders, among that band of hard-working men, who followed Him who walked the Galilean hill-slopes and whom the rulers called "the carpenter's son," and yet, their pictured faces look from palace walls in gilded chambers, from cathedral dome, and chapel niche. She was a lowly woman, whose babe lay in a manger, where horned cattle fed—she, whom the rulers knew, as the mother of the star-heralded one; and yet, the "singers of high poems," gather about her, revealing by their words, as the artist does by his brush,

"An image of some bright eternity,
A shadow of some golden dream,"—

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while

> "There is a vision in the heart of each,
> Of justice, mercy, wisdom, tenderness
> To wrong in pain, and knowledge of their cure;
> And these embodied in a woman's form,
> That best transmits them pure as first received,
> From God above her to mankind below!"

And why is all this, but because the glory caught in those poor men's faces, in that humble virgin's smile, was the same *light* that may look forth now, from the poor and lowly, as well as the rich and cultured,—the light reflected from the Divine illumination that fills the soul, that knows the abiding presence of Him—our Lord Christ.

Dinner was all ready, "smoking hot," when they reached the farm-house.

"We 'ill stop and rest for a good bit," said Phil (for the day was sultry), "and give the sun a chance to git the start on us; better be a little behind time at M——, than melt away agoing."

So the shadows of the trees were begin-

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ning to lengthen when they started again, and a cool breeze had sprung up. Paul was almost sorry to go; for, spite his anxiety to know what would come next, he had made friends with the farmer and his wife, who were aged people, and who had once had a "boy of their own."

"Jist wait a bit, sonny," the old woman called, as Paul was running toward the wagon, in which his father and the other men were already seated—"wait a bit;" and she disappeared behind one of the many doors opening out of the great kitchen, coming back in a minute with her apron full of rosy-cheeked apples, with which she filled Paul's pockets and a little willow basket, saying, as she gave it to him,

"I reckon ye'll like 'em by and by." And it must have been something in the thought of the boy's being motherless (for Phil had told her), that touched her heart with unwonted tenderness, for she stooped down and kissed the child, as she whispered, "Remember; be a good boy, allers; for

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God can see ye, whatever ye do; and, like enough, yer Ma can, too.

"Come along," called Phil, and Paul had not time to reply; but, as they drove away, he turned back to wave his hand, saying, at the same time, to his father, "I like folks that live on the top of hills, they are so kind."

If the boy could have looked at Phil's face as he uttered those words, he would have seen the same "shining look" that had shone before in the old man's eyes; he would have seen his lips move, as he muttered, in a low voice to himself, "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

Turning round, Phil said, aloud,

"I reckon, Mr. Foster, the followers of the Lord, as the Dominie calls 'em, are 'hill top' folks. Don't you?"

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IX.

IT was long after sunset when they reached M——. Paul had been asleep for an hour or more, and he was so tired, he only woke up for a minute, to ask, "Where are we?" as his father carried him into the tavern, where they were to spend the night.

"Ther 'aint a crack nor a corner for ye," said the landlord, in reply to Enoch's request for a room. And he added,

"It's 'lection time, and every place is full. That 'er settee, over yonder, is the best fixin we can give ye."

"It will do," said Enoch, who did not much care, so long as there was a place for Paul to rest.

Gently he laid the sleeping boy down, covering him up tenderly as a woman

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could have done, with the home-spun blanket the landlord brought; for, though the day had been so warm, the summer night was chilly.

Enoch drew his chair close to Paul's side. He felt tired, and faint; and yet, had no wish to join the group of men gathered around the long table at the end of the room. All day he had struggled to keep back the great home-sickness, the great longing in his heart for Faith—just one glimpse of Faith, his little Snow-flake—one touch of her hand, one whisper of her dear voice; and at night-fall it came over him and would not be quieted. Like a rushing torrent, in early spring, it seemed, dashing on its way, regardless of the upspringing flowers—the budding trees—it carried before it on swift tide, out to the broad shoreless ocean.

And there Enoch sat, all through the long night, feeling alone with his grief, for he forgot, that dark night, the One who can change sorrow into joy was still near him.

Not till the faint morning light was

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edging the horizon line with a pale silvery glow, did he fall into a restless sleep, which could have lasted not even a brief half hour, for it was still dark in the room when he felt the touch of Phil's hand on his shoulder, and heard the sound of the old man's gruff, but kindly voice, as he said,

"I'm off, Mr. Foster, good-bye to ye, and good fortin tend ye and the young un. A lively, wide-awake chap he is, that boy of yourn." And the old man's tone grew lower, almost tremulous, as he added, "The Lord bless ye both. And, ye know, He's a leading you, in the dark, jest the same, Mr. Foster, as He leads ye when ye'r' in the light, only ye don't see Him so plain like—that's all the difference."

Hardly had Phil gone when the landlord appeared, saying:

"Step this way if you want breakfast afore ye go; it'll be time for ye to start afore long."

"Wake up," said Enoch, as he bent over the sleeping boy, "wake up."

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Paul shook himself, and looked round, bewildered by the strange room, and unknown man. Half frightened, he caught hold of his father's hand, and, not till Enoch explained, "This is the tavern where we came last night with Phil," was the child reassured.

The breakfast was a hasty meal; so hasty, that the morning light had not put the stars out, when Enoch and Paul started once more on their journey.

Strange eventful days were those which followed; full of new emotions to Paul, who thought the wonders being revealed to him, on the "other side of the hill," would never end, for, "We are over now, ain't we, father?" he said.

And yet, those days all blended into one confused memory in the child's mind; where crowded stage coaches, rough roads, villages, rivers, and mountains, were oddly mingled one with the other. Only the first day, the day of leaving home and driving over the hills with Phil, and the last day of their journey, stood out in his memory ever

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clearly defined and isolated from the intervening time; for in this, the young are like those who have traveled far on in life's pilgrimage, and who go back to the starting place, and tell you of it as though it were but yesterday, bridging over the years between with scarce a word, as they link the long ago Past with the Present. Have you never noticed this, standing by the side of some old man, with bowed form, and time-whitened hair, hearing him tell of the days when he was a boy—seeing his face light up with the recollection of some merry frolic, a school-boy prank, or perchance some tenderer tale—some tale like that of which the poet sang:

> "I've wandered east, I've wandered west,
> I've borne a weary lot;
> But in my wanderings, far and near,
> Ye never were forgot.
> The fount that first burst frae this heart,
> Still travels on its way·
> And channels deeper as it rins,
> The luve o' life's young day."

And have you never wondered what he

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has done with the strong years of his manhood—the prime of life-time, when temptations were the fiercest, when the struggles for name and reputation were the strongest? He seems to forget those years so, as he tells the story of his boyhood.

Why is it?

It is of a garden—a garden where fairest flowers bloomed, where rarest fruits ripened, where in peace "the lion and the lamb dwelt together," that we read, in the opening verses of the story in *The Book*. It is of a land where a pure river flows, a river clear as crystal; where "the tree of life grows, yielding her fruit every month, and leaves for the healing of the nations;" where walk "the great multitude, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," the closing verses of the Book's story tell. Thus are linked in our thoughts the Earthly Eden and the Heavenly Paradise. And, is not this underlying *oneness* of description and likeness between the first home of man, and the last home of man, a mystical type

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of the heart story we read traced on the pages of memory, which turns backward to the starting place—childhood, the flower-blooming time, and then passes on to tell of the "peace which floweth like a river" through the soul that walks with God; the soul in which "the fruits of the spirit" have ripened, because of the shining of the "Sun of righteousness," which maketh light at eventime. For surely, if there is in every dew-drop, in every wayside grass blade, a whisper of the Lord, we may find in every Bible verse, however brief, some glowing word interpreting our human life.

But what was there in that last day of Paul's journey to make him remember it so well? A dreary mist was over everything in the morning, which, long before noon-time, had become a pouring rain; but, towards sunset it cleared, and bright gleams of golden sunshine stole in broad bands across the wood road through which Enoch and Paul's way led.

They had bade good-bye to the good-

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natured driver of the stage coach, in which they had been traveling for the last two days; and Paul had watched it rumbling along over the muddy turnpike toward the town of H——, till it had passed quite out of sight. Then, he joined his father, who was trying to persuade one of the half dozen slovenly-looking men, lounging about the wayside tavern and toll gate, to drive him and Paul over to Tompkinsville.

"It's awful wet," the man responded; "the roads will be powerful heavy. I don't see how I can do it, no how;" and he puffed away lazily at the pipe he was smoking; but a little more persuasion, and the promise of an extra shilling or two, induced him presently, as he expressed it, "to hitch up the horse," a poor, ill-fed animal, with the appearance of barely sufficient strength to drag along the rickety wagon and blue chest, which, with Enoch's help, was stowed away behind the one seat, on which he, with Paul on his knee, and the driver—whom the men called "Jake"—sat. They

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drove on quietly till Paul said, looking at the sunshine:

"It must be cloudless now, out where you can see up to the sky."

Enoch smiled at the words, a sad smile; he was trying so hard to "see up," for the boy's sake and his own, and yet he could not.

"What's the matter, father," whispered Paul. "Don't you like it here?"

Not waiting for a reply, eagerly he exclaimed, "Hark! what's that?" And, holding his father's hand tightly, he leaned over the side of the wagon, gazing down into the ravine below, where, through the hemlock boughs, he caught the glimmer of water, and heard the rippling, lapping music of a swift-flowing stream, plashing over a pebbly bed. The sound grew louder every minute. And again Paul asked:

"What is it? It's more than a brook."

"My gracious!" said Jake, "it's nothin' but the water-fall ye hears. We 'll come to it jist a bit further along. Didn't ye niver

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hear a fall afore? They's plenty as bees in these 'er' parts."

A steep descent in the road prevented Paul's answer.

Then came a sudden turn, and it was before them—the swift moving water, falling over the arched rocks above in a thousand broken streams—silvery ribbon-like streams, and in showers of sparkling drops, whose tiny foam-crested wavelets chased one another in a never-ending chase, till they broke on the rocks below, where they lingered not a moment, before pursuing their onward way; some, creeping over the dark moss-covered rocks, which lifted themselves out of the bed of the stream; others, dashing along, and all moving, none still; for even the deep pools, which looked so quiet, where the over-branching trees, and far away blue of the sky were mirrored, changed all the time; for into them, too, thread-like streams stole, forcing drop by drop, the quiet water out and on over the lichen-covered rocks.

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"It don't stay still anywhere a moment. Does it, father?" said Paul. "Even the littlest drops are running away from those coming, all the time."

"No," replied Enoch. "Water, when it has anything to do, don't stay still, Paul."

And Enoch began to talk with Jake, about the mill at Tompkinsville, and the water-power of the streams. But Paul pondered over his father's words long after they had started on their way again. Something in them touched the child. And thus it happened, the water-fall, and the foam-tossed drops, never were forgotten by him; and, when in after years he looked upon many a more beautiful cascade, famed in picture and in song, the old wonderment, wakened that day when his father said, "Water never stands still when it does anything," would come up in his heart, causing thoughts, which asked, "Why must it go on, never pausing to rest, never asked whether it be weary or not, but just forced on its way, as life forces man on?" Other thoughts the

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memory of the water never still, ever moving, brought to Paul, too, till the memory became a tender, beautiful symbol to him of what he wanted his own life to be, however weary, however tired he might be from dashing waves and rocky paths. There came another thought, also, of how all the drops found fixed channels already traced for them — "paths prepared, by which at some appointed rate of journey, they must ever more descend, sometimes slow and sometimes swift, but never pausing; the daily portion of the earth they have to glide over marked for them at each successive sunrise—the place which has known them knowing them no more, and the gateways of guarding mountains opened for them in cleft and chasm, none letting them in their pilgrimage; and, from far off, the great heart of the sea calling them to itself! 'Deep calleth unto deep.'"

But Paul did not know all this, till, with torn sails, with wave-broken helm, he

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anchored within the haven where he learned:

> "To feel, although no tongue can prove,
> That every cloud that spreads above,
> And veileth love, itself is love" —

earned to know that only our earth language makes contradictions—stumbling blindly over freedom of will and predestined counsels of God—learned to know that the heavenly language illumines with a sunbeam, born of trust, that touch-word "*for*," of the mystery verse, "Work out your own salvation," *for*, "it is God that worketh in you."

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X.

THE last few miles of their way led through the open country; but the evening shadows had deepened before they reached it, and Paul could see but a short distance beyond the wagon, and that not for long. So, he turned his gaze upward to the sky, saying to Enoch:

"New stars are coming out all the time, father."

It was very still; the hush of the evening hour only broken by the monotonous chirp of the crickets, blended in with the lively, self-complacent notes of the little katydids and katy-did-n'ts, which were hidden away under the green leaves.

A fresh, spicy odor filled the air, as though the grass and flowers, the sweet fern and penny-royal beds were all sending

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up the concealed treasure of their fragrance as an incense to the stars.

Dancing fire-flies flitted in and out from the under-brush and tangled vines that edged the roadway.

It was an hour to waken dreams, even in the most prosaic mind; and, to a child sensitive to the influences of Nature as Paul was, laden with emotions which thrilled his heart with feelings half of pleasure, half of pain.

Enoch had not spoken except in monosyllables, since they left the water-fall; and Jake, too, was quiet, with the exception of an occasional "Gee up," to his horse.

So, they drove on for an hour or more, Paul leaning his head against his father's shoulder, and earnestly watching the stars. Suddenly he exclaimed. "Father, what do they say? Is it them talking?"

And the boy pointed up, and then bent his head a little to one side, as though to catch more distinctly the insect hum which vibrated in the air, and which his childish fancy associated with the stars.

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"Hark!" he said again, pointing to the sky, "they are twinkling out loud."

"No, no, Paul," replied his father, "stars make no sound. It is the crickets you hear."

"They be awful wide awake and brisk, to-night," chimed in Jake.

"What are stars, anyway?" continued the boy.

"Yes, what be they?" responded Jake. "That's jist what I'd like to know meself. They be the pertest, shininest little things ever I seed—looking down on a feller when it's a clear night, and making him feel a' sort of 'shamed, when he ain't done nothin' so far out o' the way. Some folks reckon they be tother worlds like ourn; but, 'cording to my calkelations, they be mighty more like the eyes of them that's dead, a lookin' down on us living folks. Do ye see that ar little un over yender? (and Jake pointed up.) It's got jist the very look my sister Marthey Jane had the night she was took off. As likely a girl as ever ye see, Marthey

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Jane was. And that ar big star, a sailin along so steady-like and shining, it's the very way our old parson used to look—straight into us fellers. He was took—the Parson was—all on a sudden, last winter, of rheumatis in the heart."

Paul was all wonderment. Did Jake really know? Was it true that the stars were the eyes of those gone "up to the sky" looking down? and was that what the farmer's wife had meant, when she said, "Like enough yer Ma sees ye all the time?"

His mother had once told him that the stars were shining all day, just as at night, only the bright sunlight hid them. So he thought to himself, mother can see me all the time. "'Cause I know when the clouds cover the sky, she'll ask God to make a crack in them for her to look through."

"Oh, father," he asked in a soft voice, "is one mother, and can she see us now? I like it so—what the man says. Did God tell it to him?"

Enoch was puzzled. He "liked it," too,

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as the boy said—the thought that Faith's eye was ever on him and little Paul. And yet, was it true?

While Jake and Paul were talking, Enoch tried to remember the Bible verses he had read, thinking, perhaps, in them he could find the solution of Paul's question. He recollected one about "shining as a star," and then he thought of the verse, "Ye are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses." Why might the witnesses not be the stars? He knew the Bible said of those gone to heaven, they were "a multitude, whom no man could number." And he lifted his eyes up to the numberless stars of the upper world, while there stole into his heart a great peace that had not been there since Faith left him. For he thought, "I won't feel so lonely if I can think she knows and sees." And then, a smile lit up his face as he looked at Jake's slouching figure, thinking, Who ever would have guessed that man would have given me comfort?

But that last thought of Enoch's was a

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mistake; for it was not the man, who had given him comfort, but the Spirit that had spoken through the man.

By this time they had reached the outskirts of the rambling village. Driving up through the long narrow street they stopped at what seemed to Paul a house, big as a "meeting house," while Jake said,

"This be the place, I reckon, ye's a wanting."

An hour later, Paul was sleeping quietly. The journey ended — for, "This is really Tompkinsville," his father had told him, in reply to his whispered question, "Is this the place, father?"

A dreamless sleep was the boy's, which was well, for it set a seal on the memories of his by-gone life, leaving ever clear and well-defined the recollection of his care-free childhood, which ended that night; leaving, too, the vivid impression that the flowers, the bird songs, the glad sunlight, the gentle starbeams, the sweet fragrance of hay-fields and way-side herbs, were all loving smiles

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of the Lord, his Heavenly Father, of whom his mother had told him in the tender twilight hours, when they had sat together on the door-step of the cottage home, saying, "Always remember, Paul, 'God is love.'" Thus the child's heart recognized, and the Father set His seal upon the truth, which we may all for the seeking possess, "that vocal speech is not the only language, the lighting up of the face not the only smile, the pressure of an arm of flesh not the only embracing; for the bright-faced sky, the smiling earth, scented, and singing, and festive spring and summer, innumerable anthems and poetries of delightful nature also are God's tender looks, and words, and sacred kisses to us."

And this knowledge, though it kept hidden away for years in Paul's soul, proved the priceless legacy left him by his mother, —Faith,—whom Enoch called "My Little Snow-flake."

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CHAPTER SECOND.

YOUTH.

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"Nought
In life without much toil is bought.
In this world of ours,
The path to what we want ne'er runs on flowers."

—HORACE.

"Consider it
(This outer world we tread on) as a harp,—
A gracious instrument on whose fair strings
We learn those airs we shall be set to play
When mortal hours are ended. Let the wings,
Man, of thy spirit move on it as wind,
And draw forth melody. Why should'st thou yet
Lie grovelling? More is won than e'er was lost:
Inherit. Let thy day be to thy night
A teller of good tidings. Let thy praise
Go up as birds go up that, when they wake,
Shake off the dew and soar.
So take Joy home,
And make a place in thy great heart for her,
And give her time to grow, and cherish her;
Then will she come, and oft will sing to thee,
When thou art working in the furrows; ay,
Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.
It is a comely fashion to be glad,—
Joy is the grace we say to God.
Art tired?
There is a rest remaining. Hast thou sinned?
There is a Sacrifice. Lift up thy head,
The lovely world, and the over-world alike,
Ring with a song eterne, a happy rede,
'*Thy Father Loves Thee.*.'"

—JEAN INGELOW.

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I.

SCARCELY a week had gone by after Enoch and Paul reached Tompkinsville, before they were fully started in the new life, Enoch finding work at once in the largest of the many mills, which lined for miles the banks of the creek that ran through the town; while Paul was sent immediately to the village school, where he soon won his way into the heart of the teacher, and the good-will of the scholars.

"Though he ain't a bit like most boys," said the squire's son—the curly-headed urchin, who ruled the little world of school likes and dislikes.

But, by the time Paul was twelve years old, he had outstripped the limited knowledge of the pale-faced teacher, who year after year, went over the same pages of

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spelling and reading, geography and cipher-ing, and whose teaching abruptly ceased, when the children under her care had conquered the mysteries of multiplication, long division, three-syllable words, and State bounding.

"Going to school to her, father," said Paul, "seems like walking a path in the woods, where you come out suddenly on a precipice, and find you cannot go any further."

And Enoch decided that his boy must leave the village school.

"What 'll ye do with him now?" asked Mrs. Jenkins, the somewhat rough-voiced and harsh-tempered woman, with whom many of the "mill-hands" boarded, and among them Enoch and Paul.

"Put him into the mill, I reckon; thar's nothin' like settin' children to it young; and what does he want with more larnin' than he 's got already?"

But Enoch did not agree with Mrs. Jenkins, and he answered.

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"No, Paul will go to the Academy now."

"To the Academy!" responded the woman. "Who ever heerd the like o' that? A boy whose father's nothin' but a mill-hand, a-going to the Academy, along with Lawyer Blake's sons, Squire Ludlow's girls, and all the iristocrats! Well, I do declare!"

Telling it over in the kitchen, she added, "If Enoch Foster's ambition for that boy of his'n don't beat all ever I see."

Only a month later Paul's name was entered among the new pupils who were to begin the fall term at the Academy, where he had attended for the three years preceding the time of which we now write. The tall slim lad he had become during those years was very unlike the eager question-asking boy who had driven over the hills with old Phil five summer-times before. Yet to Enoch he seemed a child, even though he had altered so greatly in outward appearance, and in heart, too, since then; for on Paul's face was plainly written that he had indeed "looked over the hill" of

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childhood, and found on "the other side not only fair, beautiful pictures, but dark, dreary pictures too. Still those mystica. tracings, by which the soul stamps purity of thought on brow,—truth of heart in fearless wide-open look, revealed, that, if "shades of the prison-house" had begun to close

> "upon the growing boy,
> He still beheld the light, and whence it flowed."

Enoch had sheltered Paul in every way he could from the evil so plentiful in Tompkinsville; but he was a bright lad, with a keen yearning for knowledge, though given more to listening than to talking. He attracted, too, much attention from his skill in picture-making, which had developed with every passing year. Delicate sketches of way-side flowers, plumey fern tufts, or moss-covered rocks, he was constantly drawing on odd scraps of paper and blank pages in his school-books. He would outline, too, in bold charcoal strokes on the high unpainted fence that enclosed the mill-

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yard, sketches of trees, hills, and the banks of the creek; or, in miniature size, he would duplicate the new factory, gone up at the end of the village. This last achievement of his art the beholders thought most wonderful.

"How do you ever make it small, and yet the very same looking thing as the big factory?" they were wont to ask; and Paul could not explain, for he was unlearned yet in the secret of "how he did it."

The men took great satisfaction in these rude efforts of Paul's; there was a certain rough loyalty of feeling in their hearts towards the motherless boy, as though in a sort of way he belonged to them all; and every new prize he won at the Academy they heralded with a clanship exultancy over the "uptown" folks, whom "our boy has beat again," as they said. A warm welcome always awaited him in the mill-yard during the long twilight of the summer days; and in winter evenings, the chair nearest to the blazing wood-fire in Mrs. Jenkins' front room was always called "little Paul's."

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Paul's associates at these times were among the most respectable of the mill workers; indeed, the lad's innate refinement of nature prevented his mingling with the coarse and vulgar; thus he escaped many sullying influences, but he did not pass unscathed through the ordeal of "dark sayings," sceptical queries as to the truth and existence of God as a Father of Love, which formed so often the topic discussed by those dust-begrimed men, whose life-way led over such rough, toilsome roads. But deep down in Paul's heart ever stayed the recollection of his mother's words, "Always remember, 'God is love.'"

Yet, spite these tender memories, spite the firm trust of his father in this same loving God, the boy would ask,

"Why is it, if He loves, that He let people suffer so?"

And the only answer Enoch could give was the old reply (known to us all, though we frame it in different words),

"Don't think about it too much, Paul;

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just do the work the Lord sends, and trust Him; for faith in Him, and work for Him, boy, is about all that brings lasting peace; and, if you stop to think of other folks' lives, you 'll spend pretty much all your time a smiling or a weeping at the things you see, and which you never can understand, unless you believe in God: then a something comes, a settling the questions you have left with Him. I cannot explain it to you," Enoch sometimes added, "but all you have to do about it, is just to love and obey the Lord Christ, just to do right, and you 'll know what I mean."

After one of those quiet talks with his father, Paul would feel satisfied for a week or two, giving no heed to the slighting words he now and then heard spoken of the Bible story.

But Tompkinsville was a growing place, and Paul, though he was but one, a comparatively little one, among the grown men of the town, felt, just as the tiny wavelet feels, the incoming and outgoing tide, rolling the

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great waves on toward some quiet haven, or away toward the rapid river flowing into the broad ocean; and he, like every member of its population, had to pay the penalty of all growth—the penalty that all things in the natural and spiritual world must pay, if they would be! Is it too costly a price?

The tender grass-blades, pushing their way up through the heavy earth clods in early spring, cover the very clods with soft green before the summer comes, and murmur "No."

The tired student with aching brain, who through sleepless nights has climbed some thought-height, whispers "No."

The undaunted artist, who day after day has struggled for mastery in the mystery of colors, for vision touch and life-like form, with weary hand and weary eye uplifts the magic brush to the heaven from which color comes, and answers "No."

The humble imitator of Christ, who, like Him, would be a "son of consolation, who would partake of the priestly gift of sym-

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pathy," learned in walking close after Him, the "Man of Sorrows," and whose crown of victory is a thorn crown, sings, in exultant song, "No."

Great interest the mill workers, who had been for years employed in the red painted, low wooden buildings on the Creek bank, felt in the brick factory with its Tower of Babel chimney, that lifted its smoking mouth up towards the peaceful sky, "which is just as blue," Paul said, "as if all that smoke did not go up."

The building of this factory, and the coming of the operatives employed in it, had changed Tompkinsville from a quiet village into a bustling town; and the once almost empty streets were now thronged with a motley crowd of men, women, and children. The maple grove, where the Academy boys and girls had hunted in early spring, for the first anemones and violets, where they had found in autumn the brightest leaves, where the school children had been wont to catch in their little shining dinner pails the gurg-

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ling sap which they called "good," even when their pretty mouths had puckered at the sharp taste; and where, on a Fourth of July, or occasional holiday, the tired mill hands had celebrated some outdoor festival, had been ruthlessly "cut down" to make way for the line of ungainly tenement houses, in which the factory people lived.

And at morning, noon, and sunset, breaking harshly the quiet of the country, sounded the clang of the great bell, which called the laborers to and from work. A loud discordant note it rang, which quite drowned the fainter peals from the belfries of the meeting-house and Methodist chapel.

Among the new comers were men from many countries, lands beyond the sea; and verily, if the high chimney looked like a Babel tower, the languages they spoke, the faiths they clung to, made, indeed, a confusion of tongues. For, of the Pentecostal breath of "peace and good-will," for which the little band of men, who met together on a Wednesday and Saturday night, prayed,

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they had to say, yet, "It bloweth where it listeth."

"But it will come," said Enoch to Paul, one cloudy autumn night, as returning from "meeting," they passed through the noisy street where men and boys were quarreling, dogs barking, and sad-faced women bargaining for the scanty measure of meal, or musty flitch of bacon, which must make the breakfast and dinner on the morrow, not only for themselves, but for many a hungry child beside.

"Yes," Enoch continued (though he sighed wearily as he looked about him), "it will come, even though we have to watch and wait for it, as watchmen wait for the dawn in the long nights of winter. 'Seek the Lord till He comes and rains righteousness upon you,' that is the promise, Paul."

These words Enoch uttered just as they entered Mrs. Jenkins' door; at the same time, a man's voice repeated loudly, the lines:

"Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be."

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He was in the front room, and the door stood ajar.

It was one of the new operatives at the factory—a sort of overseer, and a man not unlearned in books.

"I wouldn't go in, Paul," said his father, as the lad turned toward the half-open door, adding, "It will do you no good to hearken to what he has to say."

Paul hesitated. He was no longer a child. Why should his father restrain him? What harm could it do for him to listen to the man's conversation for an hour? And, standing there, for a minute his heart rebelled against his father; for a minute he was tempted to disobey. And his father did not turn back to call to him "Come," so he stood irresolute. Perhaps it was written on his face; for Paul had a tell-tale face, and he was standing in the full light of the hall lamp, just where the man who was talking could see him.

"What are you standing outside for, lad?" he called. "Come in. Do you

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think we are eating forbidden fruit from the 'tree of knowledge,' that you hesitate so? You have just come, if I mistake not, from the meeting, where you had a bite of the 'Good.' Are you afraid to nibble at the Evil,—hey?"

The man's words roused Paul. Yet, he lingered still irresolute, and he did not know at that time the decision of the next few minutes would give coloring to all the after years of his life. But, before the next day's sun had set he knew that it had. Again, another voice sounded, saying, more gently, "Come in, Paul; we are talking of the debate the factory folks are going to have with us mill-hands. We've about decided to take for our subject, 'Is there a heaven and a hell?' The factory folks take the negative, and we go in for the other side."

Paul listened eagerly. He pushed the door wide open. He went a step or two into the room, where a crowd of men and lads were assembled talking and smoking.

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"The smoke is awful thick," said a man. "Raise the window, I say, as you come along, Paul."

The boy turned to do as bid. Leaning out for a minute—for his eyes were half-blinded by the smoke—looking up, far up above the tall chimney, he saw a little star shining through a rift in the clouds; and, though they had been forgotten for weeks, he seemed distinctly to hear the words of the old farmer's wife saying to him, "Like enough yer Ma sees ye all the time." He seemed to be riding through a dark night, as he rode that long ago night, leaning his head against his father's shoulder, while he looked up at the "bright-eyed twinklers," which Jake had said, "seemed jist like them that was dead, a looking down."

Quickly—not waiting to reply to the query, "Where are you going, Paul?"—he left the room, running up the stairs two steps at a time. He did not pause to ask why he had turned from the temptation which, only a few minutes before, seemed so alluring.

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And, if he had asked himself, perhaps he could not have told. But, if "up there" they know what goes on down below, Faith was glad that night, for she knew the prayer, "Lord, keep him from evil," offered years before, for her baby boy, was answered that hour. And why should we not think they know? when the sacred page tells us, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Paul and his father talked late. The boy frankly told of the half disobedience of action; the real disobedience of heart. And Enoch seemed suddenly to realize that the lad was no longer a child, and his replies to Paul's confessions of much wrong-doing and thinking during the past months, were in words such as a man uses to a man, whom he meets on the level of recognized manhood. And yet, they were interwoven with fatherly words of counsel and tender encouragement, which Paul never forgot.

"You will be sixteen to-morrow," Enoch said presently. "Did you remember it,

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Paul?" And then, father and son turned the leaves of the old Bible to the family record page, where Paul's birth date was written, beneath the names of his father and mother. And, while Paul looked at it, Enoch's eye wandered on till it rested on the opposite page. He remembered so well the hour when he wrote the names traced there—the hour when Faith came to his home a bride. After that—sitting together in the dim light of the solitary tallow candle which lit the room—he told Paul much of his early life, much of his mother, that the boy had forgotten. They talked long and earnestly; so long, that the candle had burned down into the socket, where it flickered and flared like some suffering thing that did not want to go out, before Enoch turned to another page, where Faith's name was written alone—the page, waiting for the names of father and child, before the family record would be complete.

As they looked, the candle flared again,

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and Enoch bent down and shielded it with one hand from the night wind, which came in through the open window, while with the other hand he turned the Bible leaves over to the oft-read chapter in John's Epistle, saying:

"See, Paul, here is the mark of your little fingers where you used to read to your mother and me of a Sunday, long ago."

And Paul saw it—the soiled mark on the white margin of the leaf, just opposite the verse, "God is love." And then the candle flickered for a moment and went out, and the room was dark.

"But we can find our way, I guess," said Enoch, as he groped toward the corner of the room where the bedstead stood; Paul following him.

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II.

THEY slept late the next morning; so late, there was barely time for the chapter and prayer which it was Enoch's wont to read and offer, before going to work, when the ringing of the factory bell warned him it was full time he should start for the mill. Paul had more time, and after breakfast he went up into their little room again, busying himself, not in studying his lessons, but in rummaging among the few treasures which still were kept in the blue chest.

He was looking for the old slate from which the crooked lines his little hands had traced had never been rubbed off. The youth's heart was tender, from the making of "good resolutions," and the recent talk with his father, which had woke up so many

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half-forgotten memories. "I wish I could do something to please father and make him more comfortable," he said to himself. And for the first time he seemed to notice how cheerless their room was—how unlike the cottage home. "And it is all because he spends everything to give me an education," Paul thought, as he hung up his father's worn coat, which he had taken from the peg in the closet, to make room for the lid of the open chest. It was his father's Sunday coat; yet, it was threadbare at elbow and wrist.

Almost sadly Paul turned away, going down stairs and through the hall so slowly, so unlike himself, that Mrs. Jenkins, whom he met busy with broom and duster, asked,

"What's happened to ye, Paul, ain't ye well?"

"Yes, I am well enough," he replied, and quickened his step.

It was a dreary morning, the wind whistled through the trees, sending down with every fresh gust showers of yellow

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leaves — twisting them about, the restless rustling things, in little eddies, huddling them in door steps, corners, and nooks. The waters of the creek were dark and troubled, and the fall just beyond the mill dam seemed to have forgotten all about its sweet summer time song—it leapt over the rocks with so sullen a roar, as though responding to the moaning wind.

At the Academy they had kindled a fire in the old stove, round which Paul found a group of youths and maidens gathered, who called to him as he entered, "Come, join us."

But, he could not tell why, he had no heart for fun that morning; so, going straight towards his desk, he shook his head, saying, "I've some work to do before the bell rings." And yet he sat listlessly watching the others for full five minutes.

A little later the master came, a young man who had graduated only a few years before from an Eastern college, and who looked scarcely older than many of his

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pupils. Then the bell rang, and was followed by the opening exercises—a hastily read chapter and a brief prayer; and then the hum of recitations going on at the far end of the room, the smothered whispers of sunny-faced brown-eyed girls, were blended in with the low mutterings of slow learners, who thought by sound to conquer the puzzling verb or bewildering sum.

This must have gone on for an hour or more, for the echo of the "town clock," striking ten, had long ago died away, when there came a sharp rap at the school-room door.

Paul started to his feet, though it was not like him to be nervous, and before any one had time to reply to the new comer's question, "Is Paul Foster here?" he had sprung over his desk, and stood with white face before the man, eagerly saying, "Quick, tell me quick, is father hurt?" It was over in five minutes,—the excitement in the school-room; and Paul had gone, never waiting to hear the end of the little speech

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the rough man had conned over and over, on his way from the mill, thinking how he could "break the news easy-like to the lad."

"Don't be scared," he had said; "a scaffolding down at the new building going up at the mill gave way, and yer father—he was just a-passing under—and, ye see—well—its kind o' knocked the breath out of him; but he 'll be all right agin, I reckon; don't be scared."

These last words were spoken to the master and frightened scholars, and then with an awkward bow, the speaker hastened down the street after Paul's vanishing figure.

Before the boy reached the house, they had carried Enoch's bleeding and bruised form up-stairs—the very stairs he had gone down only a few hours before, in the strength of his manhood.

They had tenderly laid (those rough, hard-working men) their helpless, groaning burden on the little bed; and then, noiselessly, they had crept from the room, and joined

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the anxious-faced company gathered round the door. There were women there wringing their hands, and little children peering in with awe-struck looks. But they all made way for Paul. Even the doctor, who, had harshly turned every one from the room spoke gently to the lad, saying, "Come in,' and Paul, he crept close to the bedside—so close the crimson drops from the cruel wounds fell on the boy's hand. "Father! father!" he softly whispered, "don't you know me—Paul?" But no answer came; the silent white lips framed no word; the heavy eyelids did not lift, and thus the day stole on toward nightfall—the dreary autumn day of moaning wind and leaden clouds. And the quiet in the room was unbroken, save by the gasping breath of the dying man, and the faint ticking of the little clock, so ruthlessly counting the quickly passing minutes.

Paul never left the bedside—never uttered a word after that first pleading cry, "Father, don't you know me;" and they did not try

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to lead him away, for "it will be over in an hour or two," the doctor had said; yet life still was there when the midnight bell struck. And "he is better," Paul thought, as the doctor held the candle so that its full light fell on the sufferer's face, for Enoch opened his eyes, while his lips moved as though to speak; but not for a minute after did the broken, almost inarticulate words come. Paul bent his head low to catch them, those last words, "A—Father—of the —fatherless,"—and then Enoch struggled again for the fast wasting breath, before he murmured, in a voice that seemed to Paul far off, so low and strange was it, "Rest—Home — Christ—Snow-flake — and — little Paul." And he smiled, while once again he whispered, "A Father—of—the—fatherless."

And then—a shadow—a gray shadow. stole over his face; the cold hand which Paul held grew colder; the feeble clasp of the fingers loosened, and—a great silence filled the room. Half an hour after

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they led Paul away; they told the anxious-faced men waiting down in the front room,

"He 's gone"—"Paul Foster is an orphan now."

Coming down stairs, the doctor heard the words, and out loud and clear he spoke, so loud that Paul in the inner room, distinctly heard him say,

"No, Paul is not an orphan; for Enoch Foster's God will be a 'Father to the fatherless.'"

Then the front door closed after the doctor, whose work was over.

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III.

"NIGHT brings out stars as sorrow shows us truths." Thus the poet sang, and thus many a sad mourner has learned, meeting, where least they thought to meet them, with deeds of kindness, shining deeds of tender sympathy, revealing the truth, that kind hearts are everywhere. Paul found it so during the first hours of his grief, for there seemed no end to the helping hands stretched out to him; and yet they were all powerless to comfort; even the words his father had said, those last words, "A Father of the fatherless," seemed to him as an empty sound.

They had let him go back to the little room, where they had closed the blinds and shut out the bright sunlight (for the storm was over at dawn); and there they let him

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stay quietly by the side of the white-covered bed where the motionless form lay.

Paul held in his hands the old Bible; he turned the leaves to the page he had bent over only such a little while before with his father; he read the verses which he knew had been precious to both father and mother, but they seemed all cold and meaningless to him, for it was Christ, not the Bible verses, that could console, and he did not look then to Christ. But, like many another groping heart-sick seeker for comfort, he hugged close the sacred pages, forgetting the hand of faith must be clinging to Christ, before the Scripture becomes illumined; forgetting that the Bible record is but as the fringe of that garment the trembling woman touched, and in touching was made whole, *because* she had first looked on the Lord. While in the pressing crowd thronging about Him, many another touched that same fringe, and yet to them no healing came, for their gaze was on the twisted

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cord, the seamless robe, rather than on Him who wore it.

Alas, how often we turn thus to the Book saying, "Others, weary, sin-tempted and trouble-tossed, find comfort here! Why not we? And we read the very same words, and yet are not comforted, for not the Scripture, but Christ, is what we want —"Christ who gives to Scripture its worth."

So, all alone, Paul felt; it seemed to him, as though he had been pushed suddenly out of some safe mooring-place into mid-ocean, where his frail bark was a toy for the sport of winds and stormful waves. Yet outwardly he was calm, keeping the great grief throbbing in his heart to himself, never giving up to a wild outburst of sorrow but once, and that was the day when he heard the muffled tread of the men upon the stairs —when he knew the little room had been left empty.

The morning after the accident, there was scarcely a breakfast-table in Tompkins-

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ville round which some kind, pitying words of Paul Foster were not spoken.

Strangely unlike words they were, for human sympathy has as many different utterances as birds have songs. Yet all have a certain music, if they be true heart-words. And how do we know but the cheerless "Caw! caw!" of the gloomy-feathered crow, and the mournful hoot of the owl, have as large and important a place to fill in the bird realm as the nightingale's tender note, the up-soaring carol of the lark, or the rippling, trilling, prolonged sweetness of the golden-winged canary's song!

Squire Ludlow, president of the Tompkinsville Bank, shook his head gravely when he heard of Enoch's death, and, for the squire's mind was hedged round with dollars and cents, said, "It will be hard for the boy; he has never known want, though his father was only a mill-hand, and it is a low figure Enoch Foster's account will come to —he spent pretty much all his earnings on Paul's education." And the squire gravely

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shook his head again, as he added, "Paul has been lifted out of his station; it will make it all the harder for him, poor lad."

Lawyer Blake's wife, who lived just across the way, looked at her own boys through tear-dimmed eyes, while softly she said, thinking of Paul, "He will be so desolate, poor child!" And—she was a little woman, a winning, coaxing little woman—she whispered low to her husband, "Could n't we ask him to come to us for a few weeks, dear?" And then she met the frown gathering on the lawyer's brow—met the words framing on his lips, with a kiss, and other whispered words. "You know, he is motherless and fatherless now"—and—well—Lawyer Blake looked, as his wife had done, toward their own boys and girls, while he replied, "Have your own way, little woman! God bless you!"

The overseer at the mill gave prompt directions for the funeral, saying: "Tell the lad he will be put to no expense. Enoch Foster was always a right good, honest

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hand; the least we can do is to bury him." And his duty done, the overseer finished his breakfast.

The minister, who had been absent from town, came home that morning, and hearing the sad news from his wife, (who met him on the door-step, holding in her arms their cooing, laughing baby, "waiting for papa,") hastened away again, to go to Paul, meeting his wife's loving remonstrance, "Surely you will rest first," with the gentle reminder of the spiritual badge of his sacred office, his Master's words, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" and "The servant is not above his Master." At noontime, the mill hands assembled in little groups, talking it over, and wondering what Paul would do.

"We'll see now the real stuff the boy is made of," said one; while another told of some act of kindness Enoch had shown; and "I tell ye what," said a third, "let's give up that debate along with the factory folks. I tell ye, if ye want to know whether

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there be, as Enoch always said there was, a God alongside of folks when they dies; whether there be a heaven or a hell for 'em to go to; jist take a look at his face now—it's peaceful like as any baby's." Then the man shuddered, for he recalled another silent face, so different from Enoch's, that he had looked upon not long before—a passionate, sin-marred face.

The young teacher of the Academy sought Paul, too, not to say much, only to grasp his hand warmly.

But gentle, motherly Mrs. Blake drew nearer to him than any one else. She brought autumn flowers, pure white chrysanthemums, and laid them in his hand, saying, "Place them where you like, Paul." And then she did not stay to see where he put the little blossoms, but she left him alone, coming again later in the day—not to tell him, as Mrs. Jenkins did, to "cheer up," but to sit down by his side, while, in a low voice, she said:

"Think, Paul, how long your father has

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'sailed over a rough, cold wintry sea;' lonely for your mother; then think how 'he has suddenly disembarked upon a coast, laden with the warm rich blossoms of spring.'"

The boy's picture-loving soul eagerly caught at her words, though he was not comforted by them, for, "Only Christ can comfort him," said the minister to Mrs. Blake, as they walked together down the village street, which was strewn with the dead and yellow leaves that had fallen during the yesterday's storm.

The two long days preceding the funeral gave Paul much time for thought. At first, he looked backward, recalling vividly even trifling events of his childhood; that happy time before his mother died. Once or twice, sitting alone in the darkened room, he started, almost believing for a moment he heard her voice again, gently whispering, "God is love;" and then he felt dizzy and blinded, for he knew his heart could not repeat those words; and yet, he thought, "Mother said they were true, and surely

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she knew; and father often told me never to forget them, even when things did seem dark, and surely father knew 'in whom he believed.'"

Thus the youth clung to the faith of his parents; and, for the promise is sure, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them." He was kept, those days, from utter despair, though his sorely troubled heart was not calmed yet; for, he had not called on the Lord Christ, waiting and ready to say, only for the call, "Peace, be still."

Quickly chasing Paul's thoughts of the past, came plans for the future.

"What could he do now he was alone in the world?" over and over he asked himself.

Yet, all these anxious cares were needless, for the "Father of the fatherless" had prepared a way for him, as he learned before long.

The overseer at the mill sent word to Paul "a place was all ready for him if he

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wanted it, where he could earn wages enough to keep him;" and the mill hands, who had known his father, and who felt something of a claim on Paul, urged his accepting it. An offer came, too, from the factory, where a lad, able to keep accounts, was wanted, and Squire Ludlow called this "a rare opening for Paul." Kind Mrs. Blake had also asked him to come to them for awhile, promising him papers to copy, as the lawyer's table was always piled with red taped packages, waiting to be duplicated. The doctor, too, had expressed willingness to take him into his office, for, "There is the make of a fine man in the boy," he said, recollecting Paul's self-possession and quietness during the long hours of watching by his father's side.

All these kind offers, Paul knew, after the neral (for they would not press him for an wer before then) must be set aside, unless linquished that which seemed impossi for him to relinquish—the hope of be ing an artist. Yet, how could he real

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hope without money or friends to help him, for he well knew neither Squire Ludlow, the overseer, Lawyer Blake, nor the doctor, cared for the ever-changing form and color pictures of the cloud world, except as they looked up to say, "It will be wet, windy, cold, or hot." He knew they were equally indifferent, too, to the shadows of the waving grain, the many-dyed hues of the flowers, the varied tints of green on the forest trees or wayside bushes, the moss-covered rocks, and the rippling or the storm-tossed waters. Yet, all these were to him as bread to a hungry man. How would they regard his casting aside their proffered kindness, because he, a mill-hand's boy, wanted to be an artist? And then he would lean his head down on the little table, bewildered by the future, which he must meet, without his father.

It was a cheerless day, when the long procession of sober-faced men passed through the village street, and on beyond to Paul "at place up on a barren dreary hill-

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side, where the dust of those who had "gone away" rested, till the Resurrection morning. Paul never could recall anything the minister said, except the sentence, "A God of love." Would they keep repeating those words to him always? he thought. Would he ever be able to say them himself? and then he became conscious that he was standing almost alone by the newly-made grave.

"Come away, Paul," said a kind voice; and he made no resistance, as Mr. Gray, the young school teacher, put his hand through his arm, and led him toward home. No, not home; Paul could not think of it as home now, though he had been wont thus to call the little room up-stairs at Mrs. Jenkins'.

They turned into a narrow path, away from the high road, a path that led through the fields, and by the creek side; for Paul's friend had a keen appreciation that what would comfort the boy, more than any human consolation, was the being brought into

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communion with the symbolism of Nature; so he let drop an occasional word or two which lit up and unveiled the touch of God shining on every thing, saying, "If He takes thought for the lilies of the field, the birds of the air, will He not care for you, Paul?" And he did not wait for Paul to reply. He just left the comfort-laden question with him, straightway beginning to talk of the future and Paul's plans.

Almost before he knew it, Paul had told him of his artist dreams, and had told of the little slate with the crooked lines, which his mother had known he meant for a picture of the "green pasture and still-water place."

Thus easily does true sympathy ever win confidence from the young. As Paul ceased speaking, Mr. Gray said, "I can help you, I think." And then he told what the boy called a strange coincidence, but what the young man termed a special Providence saying, "I received, this morning, a letter from a college friend, who loves art, and he

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writes," and Mr. Gray opened the letter, and read aloud,

"If, among your young geniuses, any aspiring youth wants a situation in a wood-engraving establishment, I can secure for him such a place."

They had reached the house as Mr. Gray finished reading this. And, after a few words, he left Paul, saying, "I will come to-morrow and see you about it."

Then, Paul went up-stairs to the dreary, lonely room, where he stayed by himself till long after dark, where he murmured, half aloud, the words of his after creed—though he could say but very stammeringly that night, and for many nights, the words, "God is love," "A Father of the fatherless."

But, even the hesitating, half inaudible utterance of the promises comforted him. And presently he slept, peacefully as a child.

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IV.

AFTER his talk with Paul, Mr. Gray wrote at once to his friend, and within a few days received a favorable reply, saying, "The situation at the wood-engravers' was still vacant, though several had applied for it; but, if Paul could be in the city by the following Wednesday, the place should be kept for him."

Mr. Elliott, Mr. Gray's friend, also wrote, that while the lad's position would not be that of an apprentice exactly, the understanding was, that he would remain with his employer till twenty-one years of age, while a mere pittance in the way of compensation, barely enough to clothe and board him, was all he would receive; as the advantage of acquiring knowledge, and attending free art lectures, would count, in

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the "long run," of more value, to the would-be artist, than money. The letter ended with the sentence, "You know the old saying, 'If drawing upon wood leads to any power at all in painting, that power is characterized by originality.'"

Mr. Gray carried the letter immediately to Paul, pointing out to him that if he accepted the situation, he must accept also, hard work and self-denial. Yet, he added, with a smile,

"What is worth winning, Paul, is worth striving for; and do not forget, if you undertake it, that the same truth holds good of picture making, as of every other life work, and that is, 'that while our fellow-creatures can only judge what we *are* by what we *do*, in the eye of our Maker, what we *do* is of no worth, except as it flows from what we *are*.'"

Paul looked so eagerly at Mr. Gray as he said this, that the young man tore a leaf from his note-book, saying, "I will copy the whole quotation for you; perhaps it will

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give you encouragement some day, when, perchance, you may be disheartened, from the lack of appreciation your work receives." And he wrote down the words:

"Though the fig-tree should produce no visible fruit, yet, if the living sap is in it, and if it has struggled to put forth buds and blossoms, which have been prevented from maturing by inevitable contingencies of tempests or untimely frosts, the virtuous sap will be accounted as fruit, and the curse of barrenness will light on many a tree, from the boughs of which hundreds have been satisfied; because, the Omniscient Judge knows that the fruits were threaded to the boughs artificially by the outward working of base fears, and selfish hopes, and were neither nourished by the love of God or man, nor grew out of the graces grafted on the stock of religion."

Paul folded up carefully, the strip of paper Mr. Gray handed him and laid it away in the worn pocket-book that had been his father's.

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Much opposition the plan of the lad's leaving Tompkinsville met with from his friends.

Squire Ludlow called it folly to throw away easy work and good wages for a situation where poor pay and hard labor seemed to be the chief things. "You will hardly have enough to keep body and soul together, Paul," he said, with an ominous look.

The overseer frowned, saying:

"You'll be sorry before a month is over. I reckon you had better change your mind now."

But the youth was steadfast.

The mill-hands talked it over, too; wondering what would become of the lad in a strange city.

"What do you want to go for?" they asked. "The mill was a good enough place for your father."

Yet, though their voices were gruff, the night before Paul left, they assembled in Mrs. Jenkins's front room, and out of their

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hard earned savings, made up a purse for him, saying, as they gave it, "It ain't much, but ye'll find use for it, we calculate." And when Paul decidedly said "No," he could not accept the gift, a gray-haired man, a friend of his father's, spoke up, saying, "Don't say nothin', boy, but jist take it. It ain't for yer ourn, so much as for yer father's sake, ye see. He'd ne'er a let ye go out unprovided for like,"—and Paul yielded.

It was a dismal morning when he bade good-bye to Mrs. Jenkins and "the men," who came out to the mill gate to shake hands once again, as he passed on his way to the depot, for journeying to and from Tompkinsville was no longer accomplished by a weary drive over a rough road, in stage coach or wagon, like that in which Enoch and Paul entered the place.

Paul did not dare to turn his gaze once toward the bleak hillside, where the new grave had been made scarcely a week before. Neither did he look back at Mrs. Jenkins, whom he left standing in the door-

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way, wiping her eyes on the clean calico apron which she had put on, as she said, "to look sort o' respectable like to Paul afore he went away, 'cause he was so mighty particular about sich things."

And he tried not to see the mist that rough coat sleeves rubbed away from many an eye, unused to dimness, as he said "Farewell."

He had left the blue chest in Mrs. Blake's care; only taking with him his clothes, the old Bible, little slate, sketches, and two or three books his school-mates had given him; seeking thus to show the sympathy they truly felt, yet shrank from uttering, as is the way with the young and unlearned in sorrow.

A travel-marred valise, which Mr. Gray had said, "You may have as well as not, Paul," held all his effects, including a "few things" Mrs. Blake had told him he must find room for, and which she had taken from her "own boy's" ample supply.

The minister's wife, too, had hemmed and

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marked half a dozen new handkerchiefs, (which had been given to her husband last donation day,) and she had also stitched a collar or two, which Paul could not refuse to accept, they were so kindly proffered.

The account in the bank, against Enoch Foster's name, had proved, as Squire Ludlow prophesied, very small, after deducting from it the amount due Mrs. Jenkins, and the doctor's bill; indeed, had it not been for the mill-hands' purse, Paul would have started forth almost penniless. It was growing dark when the swift-going express train neared the city, quite dark when it glided into the depot, but Mr. Gray had given him such minute directions, Paul was not bewildered, as many a country lad would have been, and yet, for a minute, he hesitated in approaching the tall, severe-looking man, whom he knew to be a policeman, from the bright-buttoned coat he wore, and whom Mr. Gray had said, would direct him to the lodging-house where his new employer had written "a room had been

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engaged for the lad." Paul's voice was so low, twice he repeated his question before the man replied, "The place ye want, well, let me see," and he led the way to the street, which was as light as day, from the many lamps; pointing down it, he said: "Go straight ahead for a block, and then turn to yer left, and the next street ye come to, turn to the right, and after a block or so, I can't jest say how many, you'll come to a sort of alley-way; somewhere along there you'll find the place," and the man turned, to answer another enquirer.

Paul could not help smiling, the direction was so utterly puzzling, yet though he smiled, his heart sank, but he said to himself bravely, "I wont lose courage this first night."

A full hour had gone by, before he found the place, a high red brick house, a dreary looking prison-like house; he rang the bell, almost dreading to have the door opened, fearing to find the interior even less inviting than the outside, which he could see

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plainly, for a street lamp was just opposite.

A slovenly woman, with a torn frock, answered his ring, and in reply to the question, "Does Mrs. Forbes live here?" said, "I am that person. Are you the young man from the country the room was engaged for?" and looking contemptuously at the little valise, she added, "Is that all the luggage you fetched along?" Paul nodded an assent to both enquiries. "Your room is in the attic," the woman continued; "follow me, and I'll show you," and taking a lamp from the hall table, she led the way up flight after flight of stairs, till at last they reached a close dingy little room, the air of which almost suffocated Paul, used as he was to the sweet fresh country odors.

"This is the place," she said, sitting down on the one chair, to take breath. "If you want a bite to eat, though we only agreed to provide you with breakfast, and it ain't our way to offer extras, come down to the kitchen, and I'll give you something; you'll

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find it at the very foot of all the stairs, and me in it most of the time, as low down as low can be," and the woman laughed a hollow, dreary sort of laugh, rising at the same time to go but first she turned for a second look at Paul's face, a sad lonely face that night, which somehow touched her heart, perhaps, because she had been young once herself, and a stranger in a strange city; whatever the cause, she lingered to say, "Don't feel lonesome, you'll like it soon, though it ain't much like the country you came from," and again she gave the quick short laugh, the laugh which sounded so like a smothered sigh.

"No," replied Paul, "not much," and in his turn he glanced at the woman, as she had done at him, and he saw something in her face, as she had seen in his, which touched him with pity. Impulsively he tore the paper (he had wrapt, to protect them from the evening chill,) from round a bunch of bright autumn flowers Mrs. Blake had given him just as he was leaving Tompkins-

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ville, while he said, "Would n't you like some?" and he divided the bunch.

It was a soiled hand that was held out to receive the flowers. A minute after, there fell and rested, like a dew-drop, on the pure leaves, a tear, which the woman seeing, said, "I have not shed one before for years." Then she wiped her eyes, and left the room, laughing again the sharp, hollow laugh; yet, all the time, she was looking tenderly at the flowers.

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V.

BEFORE seven o'clock had struck the next morning, Paul was up, and had read a chapter in the old Bible, for he said to himself, "Though I don't feel as father and mother did, I won't neglect the reading." He had shared too, with some half dozen other young men, the scanty, ill-cooked breakfast prepared by Mrs. Forbes. As they finished the meal, one of them, whose countenance had attracted Paul, stepped up to him, saying with a frank smile:

"If, as I suppose, you are the young man expected by Mr. Gilbert, the wood engraver, I will show you the way to his office, for I work in the establishment."

So he and Paul, (who carried the little package of his sketches, as Mr. Gray had bade him,) started forth.

They had not far to go, and in a few min-

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utes, the young man ran quickly up a narrow stair way, followed by Paul. Opening a door he led the way into a small office, saying, "You had better wait here till Mr. Gilbert comes; he will be in about nine o'clock," and Paul's guide hastened away to his work.

Paul looked about curiously, and fell into wondering, whether it really could be, that the dainty illustrations which Mrs. Blake had shown him in the gift books strewn about her parlor table, were brought to perfection in that dreary building, shut in by brick walls. He thought of one, a picture of a little brook, creeping along by a shady road way, in which every leaf of the overhanging willows, every blade of grass on the bankside had its place, and then he remembered another, in one of the books his school-mates had given him, a tiny picture of a rocky coast, and broad expanse of water, which stretched away to the horizon line, over which the full moon had just risen, casting its silvery brightness across the

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dark water, lighting up the white sails of an anchored vessel, while just outside the moonlight, a tempest-tossed barque was moored. Surely the artist must have pencilled the view out under the blue sky, sitting on breezy cliff, within sound of the waves breaking on the rocks below; surely he must have been in sympathy with the mind of the poem-weaver, whose verse he had transformed into a picture poem, and Paul repeated the lines, to which the sketch served as an echo:

"Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we,
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,
Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink,
As if we could slide from its outer brink.
Ah! it is not the sea,
It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,
But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean,
Ah! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,

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Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,
We shall sail securely, and safely reach
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
Will be those of joy and not of fear!"

Was it some tiny thread in the golden warp of his life, that guided his memory to those words, just as he stood on the threshold of the practical work-side of picture making? For, whether they be produced by softly-shaded, sober pencil tints, or in glowing colors, there is to every picture, as to every poem, worthy of the name, a background of *pains-taking* work, and will be, till we reach that land, where "they do rest from labor," and yet "serve day and night," for the shadow, which fell on work that long ago day, when the Voice of the Lord said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground," always rests on the toilers among men, whether they be toilers in heart, mind, or hand gardens; yet that shadow is illumined, if we remember, whatsoever we do, we may "*do all* to the glory of God."

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"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine;
Who sweeps a room as for God's laws
Makes that and th' action fine."

Paul's reverie was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Gilbert. He was an elderly, pleasant-countenanced gentleman, whose cordial manner, made the youth feel immediately at ease, while at the same time, it made him realize that a great gulf, the gulf of social position, separated him from his employer.

After a few minutes' conversation, Mr. Gilbert said:

"Come with me, and I will show you about the establishment, Foster."

A chill crept over the lad's heart, as he heard himself called thus, "Foster." "Will I never be Paul to any one again," he thought, as they passed through the long entry leading to the work-rooms, and softly he whispered, "Paul,—little Paul." It was the name his mother gave him, and, with a sudden rush of memory, he seemed to be far away, once more in the cottage by the lake side,

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and then he was in the old room at Mrs. Jenkins', he was standing by his father, reading in the flickering light of the low-burnt candle, the Bible verse, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ."

It was over in a minute, just as such rushing tides of emotion always are, and he replied, in a steady voice, to the question Mr. Gilbert asked, and then paid close attention to his explanation of the different parts of the work executed in the establishment.

There was much to interest Paul, and his speaking face was glowing with excitement when they returned to the office.

"These are some of your sketches, I suppose," said Mr. Gilbert as he laid his hand on the package Paul had left on the table; "you did right in bringing them with you."

Just as he was beginning to turn them over, the door opened, and Mr Elliott entered. He spoke kindly, though hastily, to Paul, while he looked at the sketches with Mr. Gilbert, who seemed to forget the lad's presence as he said,"

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"There are signs of power in these rude drawings; your friend Gray was right; the youth has the make of an artist in him."

"Yes," answered the new comer, as he held up a sketch; "this, though rough and unfinished, is a telling little thing."

It was a study Paul had made not long before, one summer day of the happy bygone season, a lightning-blasted oak, around which a woodbine twined for support, while mosses and lichens clung closely to the ragged torn bark, as though striving to hide the marks of the deadly lightning's flash.

The two gentlemen looked at it in silence, till, as though he suddenly remembered Paul was waiting, Mr. Gilbert turned to him, saying,

"You may go now, but come to-morrow morning, ready to begin work, as you will be directed by the gentleman in the back room," and he nodded in token of dismissal, while he resumed conversation with Mr. Elliott.

So the next day, Paul Foster began in

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good earnest the occupation which was to help him in climbing up the slowly-gained rounds in the ladder of an artist's life.

But, we must not linger to follow the youth step by step of the way he trod, during the next five years; suffice to tell, that he worked faithfully, and that Mr. Gilbert, after the first twelve months, had the discernment to discover that Paul's skêtches were mere hints of the talent for drawing with which he was so richly endowed, and that, as a draftsman on wood, he could render far more service, than by handling the tools of an engraver. So for six months, Paul's time was devoted to the study of perspective and form. Mr. Gilbert knew the outlay necessary for this would soon be paid by the youth's becoming a proficient. Rules, and grace of touch were all Paul needed to acquire, for nature, the mother art-teacher, had been instructing him all his life long, and never a clover leaf or buttercup, but found its right place in the dainty sketches he drew.

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It was a wearisome, monotonous life he led, yet, not for a moment did he ever waver in his determination to become a picture painter. It was severe discipline too, for one who loved color as Paul had done from babyhood, to set aside its charms, and patiently toil over the "black and white" sketches, which represented, but could not be equivalent to him for the charm of color, however much soul he threw into them.

Yet those long years of work upon wood, when his single instrument was a black-lead pencil, when he drew the exquisite little glimpses of woodland nook, mossy rock, graceful elm, stately pine, or tiny flower, (which delighted every beholder, though scarcely one ever asked whose hand drew the delicate things,) were training Paul for future power in his profession; even though they did seem to him, those years, like a never ending prelude, to symphony or song. His intellectual life, as it grew and unfolded, so demanded color to express itself, "like notes of music," he wrote Mr. Gray,

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"that are meaningless alone, but, blended form a rich full chord that sounds forth their depth of tone; these pencil sketches of mine seem all meaningless, wanting the tones of purity, strength, tenderness, and brightness, which belong to music and painting alike, and which the chord gives the former, while color reveals them in the latter."

This was the life helped forward by his work, but, there was another, deeper, farther reaching, even the "life everlasting," going on all the time in Paul Foster's soul, which a few pages will serve to portray.

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VI.

PAUL continued during those five years to lodge and breakfast at Mrs. Forbes' cheerless home, occupying the same dingy far upstair room, to which she had shown him that first night; though often since then, she had said,

"If you want another room, a flight lower and a little larger than this, you may have it for the same price, considering you are so quiet, and never make any trouble."

But Paul always replied,

"No! I will make no change."

The truth was, he had grown wonted to the little place; had learned to feel at home there, where he could look up through the skylight window and see the blue above. Many and many were the nights, during the first years, that cold and hungry he had

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crept into his hard and scantily covered bed, to lie for hours sleepless, yet not feeling half so lonely as he did when among the young men downstairs, because, when up there, he could see the stars; because he could repeat, over and over, the words the farmer's wife had said, "Like enough, yer Ma sees ye all the time," and Paul would add, "And Father does too." As he grew older he would sometimes sit till far into the night, bending over book or pamphlet, that dealt with those darkling investigations, which skepticism in daring bravado, and fearing nothing, holds up with alluring light before a mind like Paul's; a mind, which had been eager for knowledge, ever since the days when he had listened to the unlearned mill-hands, discussing many of the same puzzling questions.

The "new theories" fascinated him—not so very new though, for they have been puzzling and stirring minds ever since the world began, and yet, all the time, they have been bowing to the positive certainty "that

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somehow and somewhere, in spite of appearances, things are not as they seem, but justice is at the heart of them—" justice, or as the Greeks called it, destiny, which is no other than Providence, "for Prometheus chained on the rock, is but the counterpart of Job on the dunghill, torn with agony, yet still defying the tyrant, at whose command he suffered, and strong in conscious innocence, appealing to the eternal Μοῖρα which will do him right at last."

Full as it may be of contradictions and perplexities, this obscure belief Paul recognized, as lying at the very core of our spiritual natures, and though he drifted far out, on the sea of doubt, never was the golden chain of his mother's prayer broken—always it bound him, to that sure and stead-anchor, " God is love," though link after link loosened, for, like a moth eager to burn his gossamer wings, the youth played about the false lights, that showed him, not the " Father of the fatherless," but—Blankness. He had not made many friends in the city. Mr. Gil-

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bert, Mr. Elliott, and the minister at the chapel which he attended on a Sunday and on an occasional week-day evening, were about all, though he could number a few others; at least, there were two or three faces that lit up, when Paul lingered for a word, among them, the old woman's at whose stall he was wont to buy his noon-time lunch.

"Somehow," she would say, (speaking of Paul,) "the look of him does me good; he's so open-faced like; there ain't no evil things a stirrin' his heart, like as there is in some of 'em who stop to trade with me," and then, she would lay aside the largest and ripest of her little stock of apples, or most tempting looking ginger cake, reflecting, "them's what he mostly chooses."

There was a little lame girl too, who watched for his coming, every night and morning, from her place, on the hotel steps, which Paul passed on his way to and from work. In early spring and summer, the child sold violets, and in autumn and winter, cot-

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ton laces, and round-headed pins. "He always smiles at me," she said. And sometimes he dropt a few pennies into her little dirty hand, (she never guessed what hard-earned pennies they were,) taking a violet or two in exchange, violets which whispered memories to him, in strains sweet as poem or song.

Paul was liked, also, by the men who worked at the establishment, and by his fellow lodgers at Mrs. Forbes, whom we must not forget in numbering his friends, though alas! not many would have cared to call her thus, for we, the sinful, are so prone to forget the teaching of the "sinless One," and to pass by the erring and the wretched, walking on the other side—what from?—Principle or Pride? But Mrs. Forbes had changed greatly since Paul first saw her; her slovenliness had altered to tidiness, her torn dresses were mended, the shrill voice had softened, and sometimes in place of the hollow laugh, sounded a verse of some song learned in childhood, or hymn tune, caught

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at the evening meetings which Paul had persuaded her to attend, and where she had heard of Him, the Lord Christ, who looking not merely on the disciple band, but on outcast and sin-branded too, said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do what I command you."

"And, I am trying to do as He commands," she told Paul one evening in the early spring, when he ran down into her kitchen before going to his room, saying, "I have brought you a few violets, Mrs. Forbes," which he had done, because the woman's face, the hungry look out of her eyes, had haunted him all day.

Perhaps it was the sight of the little flowers, perhaps the longing for sympathy, that emboldened her to say those words, "I am trying," and gave her courage to add, "It's you I have to thank, Mr. Foster, for it was you who started me to wish to be a better woman. You see, it was that night you came, years ago now, when you gave me the flowers. Do you remember? They looked at me so kindly, the pure little things. As I went down

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stairs, something kept saying in my heart, 'God sent them,' and, I had not seen a flower, a real sunshine, out-door flower, for, I can't tell you how long before. Well, I kept them fresh for a week, and all that time they preached and preached to me, making me think of the days when I was a girl; but, by and by, they faded, and I tried to forget what they had said, but I could not. Then, the winter came, and one frosty night you said, (I remember it as though it were but yesterday,) 'Why don't you go to meeting, Mrs. Forbes, in the chapel just round the corner?' and I never liked to say *no* to you, so I went,—went off and on for a year or more, liking it better every time, for you know what I heard there, as you go yourself sometimes, Mr. Foster;" and the woman's pale, care-worn face lit up as she repeated, "You know what I heard, about Him, the Lord Christ, who calls the weary and heavy laden to come to Him, and find rest," and her voice grew strangely gentle, as she whispered, "I am trying to

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come, but, oh, Mr. Foster, I am such a sinner."

And Paul, though he was outside of the peace of believing, sat down beside her, and told the old, old story, of Christ and His forgiving love, the story he had heard his mother tell so often when he was a little child, had heard his father tell too, when he was a growing boy. Softly he said, "All you have to do, Mrs. Forbes, *they say*," (and so eager was she for what followed, she did not heed those two words, which fell so sadly on Paul's own heart, crying out for a belief of his own,) "is just to give your heart to Him, and to trust and love Him as a child trusts and loves its father and mother." Those last words Paul spoke confidently, so well he knew what love and trust in earthly parent meant.

And then, seeing the hungry look on Mrs. Forbes face again, he said, "I will tell you a story I read only this very day, from a printed paper, that came wrapped about a manuscript I am illustrating. It was of a

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little girl, scarcely six summers old, whose teacher had been telling her of Jesus, and His precious blood, that was shed to wash away sin, and who as the teacher ceased speaking said, 'I have diven my heart to Him,' and then when she was asked, "If you have given it to Him, what will He do with it?' the child replied, in a low whisper, 'Why! *He 'es dot it!*'"

"He has got it!" repeated Mrs. Forbes. "If He has got it, He will keep it. Surely he never will let Satan take it from Him." This she said, as though speaking to herself, adding aloud, as she looked at Paul, "It would be a blessed thing to know, and be sure, He had one's heart."

"Yes, so '*they say*,'" Paul answered, almost bitterly, and he left her, smiling through her tears.

He went straight up to his little room, his head aching, his heart throbbing with questions waiting to be answered. What right had he to talk thus to Mrs. Forbes, he, who had never really given his heart

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to the Saviour, of Whose love he had heard all his life long, and life looks long, to a young man of twenty.

What right had he to tell her all she had to do was to trust?

What is it to trust? he then asked himself, and the enigma questions that had been opened to him, through printed page, or sceptic's words, seemed to flood in and drown the old belief in which his father and mother rested, the child-like trust he had just unfolded to Mrs. Forbes. The faith the Bible taught, how could he reconcile it with the 'No faith,' of philosophers and materialists? How with the 'Believe nothing' theories of those scientific enquirers who, setting aside the once granted "sphere of theology," to deal with the spiritual unknown—the once accorded "right of philosophy, to ascertain how the movements of thoughts and feelings, originated in the unseen and impalpable soul," have "pressed science, through sphere after sphere, until she has arrogated to herself the chief place,

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and proclaimed her readiness to elucidate all problems, not only in discussions about stones or strata, gases, or elemental influences, but in those far more important enquiries, taking the question of the origin of man out of the hands of theology, his actions and motives out of the keeping of the philosopher, losing spiritual and mental kingdoms in the vast dreary material wilderness, of a world in which every thing is done on mechanical principles?" And yet while Paul thought thus, he felt, though he could not express clearly even to himself, "the problem of the connection of body and soul was as insoluble, in its present form, as it was in the pre-scientific ages." He was equally unable to cope with the dark suggestions which shut him away from Christ, and God; he felt stifled, and crushed. "I cannot endure it any longer," he said aloud, "I *must* know what I believe," and hastily he turned from the room to which he had come only a few minutes before for solitude, to go out, in search of human companionship.

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He was so lost in thought, he was unconscious where he was going, yet when he found himself standing before the chapel, and heard through the half-open door, the sound of a sweet hymn-tune his mother used to sing, he felt a thrill of pleasure stealing over his heart, like a moonbeam breaking in upon midnight darkness, and almost he felt as though some kind hand had led his steps there, and half audibly he said, "A Father of the fatherless," adding, "I will go in, perhaps I will get some light here, perhaps some one can help me." And all the time, close to him, was One who could help, One waiting to catch even the most faintly whispered "Lord help me."

The meeting was nearly over when Paul entered, the audience were so hushed, he crept on tip-toe to a vacant seat near the door; a stranger was in the desk, who was just closing his discourse, for all he said after Paul came were the following words:

"There is not a beam that shines from the sun, but is reflected back more or less from every dead thing on which it shines. All

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the colors of the world, the deep blue of the skies, the varied hues of the flowers, the painted plumage of the birds, the glistening shell of the insect, are but the answer that creation makes to the God who sends His sun to shine on them. The soul makes its reply to God in a reflection more suited to its own nature, higher than the skies, and more beautiful than flower, or bird, or insect, for it is the reflection of the holiness of God, His own character, broken indeed, and shattered, like the light of the sun on many waters, but a true reflection, nevertheless of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ. This responsibility is no harsh, stern, severe thing, but a thing all love; it is the soul's affectionate response, its loving reply to the God who has redeemed it, 'Seek ye my face'—'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'" After a minute's pause the Minister added, "Remember,

> "Heaven hath not so many stars,
> Nor ocean so many drops,
> Nor the day light so many motes,
> Nor the flame so many sparks—
> As He hath pardons for sin."

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Then followed a few minutes of silent prayer, the benediction, and the dispersing of the people, whom Paul followed out into the street, with a heart all unlike the turbulent heart with which he had come in. He hastened back to his little room, he opened wide the sky-light window, and standing with upturned face, where the stars could look down at him, softly but distinctly he repeated his name, the name his mother had given him, "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ," and the mild breeze of the early spring night gently blew the hair from his forehead, so gently, its touch seemed like baptismal touch of the Holy Spirit, that had unfolded for him that night, the heart of God toward man.

It was late when Paul left the window, very late, clouds had come up and hid the stars, the gentle evening breeze had changed into a chill night wind; but in his heart there was a great peace, a peace that came when the voice of the Lord had sounded in his darkened soul, saying, "Let there be light,"—and—"there was *light*."

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VII.

THE next morning Paul woke up with a heart lighter than it had been for years, though perhaps never since he was left an orphan, had he longed so much for father and mother.

He turned to the chapter they had read oftenest, in that far by-gone time, when they were all together in the little cottage home; he laid his hand, his man's hand, on the mark of the child's fingers, the soiled place his father had shown him, and then, he lived over the years since—the sin-soiled years, in which he had turned to human wisdom, rather than to the Lord's word.

Would they leave a mark, a soiled mark on the record of his life as the touch of his little hand had done on the Bible page? For a moment, while thinking thus, the light

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and peace seemed to fade out of his heart, but only for a moment, for the promised Comforter, the divine in-breathing spirit of consolation, brought to his remembrance, new-comer though he was into the Shepherd's fold, the verse, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

> "White as snow, O, what a promise
> For the heavy-laden breast!
> When, by faith, the soul receives it,
> Weariness is changed to rest."

A few minutes later, the breakfast 'bell rang, and Paul hastened down stairs, exchanging a bright smile with Mrs. Forbes as he took his seat—a smile which revealed as surely as words could have done, that like the little child of whose simple trust in leaving *all* to Jesus he had told the evening before, he was glad, (just as Mrs. Forbes was,) because like the child he had given his heart to Christ, and could say "All is well, for *He has got it.*" Yet,

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Paul knew that the new life, must be one of warfare from foes without, and the more subtle foes within; he knew he must ever be looking away from self, knew that if he would keep near to the Saviour, he must out of much weakness, and great heart-need, ever be reaching up to *strength.*

A pile of manuscripts to be illustrated were lying on his table when he entered his little work-room, which half in play, half in derision, his companions were wont to call, "The Studio." It was a tiny place, not more than five or six feet square, partitioned off from the outer room by rough boards, a table, high stool, several portfolios filled with studies, and one or two sketches, and views around Tompkinsville, were its only furniture.

Paul took a fresh sheet of paper and turned over the manuscripts, in search of something more in sympathy with his feelings, than the gay meaningless picture for a holiday book, on which he had been working the day before. It was a heterogeneous

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pile waiting to be emblematized by his pencil—a child's fairy tale, a tender poem of dreaming lovers, a quaint ballad and volumes of travel, or folios of history, lying side by side. Underneath them all, copied in a fair round hand, he found the Collects of the English church, which the note of directions accompanying them said were to be wreathed with symbol flowers and leaves, while suggestive illustrations were to be drawn for the opposite pages, all, to be left to the artist's fancy, as the hand that had commenced the task, the mind that had planned it, had ceased to work, ceased to plan. Paul selected, "Easter day," for his first illustration. He was just commencing to work, when a message came, requesting him to go at once to Mr. Gilbert's office and with never a thought of all the morning was to hold for him, he promptly obeyed the summons.

"I have been looking back," were Mr. Gilbert's greeting words, "and I find the five years you engaged to serve me, end

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shortly; let me see, this is May, and November I think it was when you came."

Paul bowed in assent, while his employer continued.

"You have done well, Foster, giving me entire satisfaction, and I have not been, as you may have thought, unmindful of your brave struggles to keep free from debt, which is bondage, lad, *bondage*—nor of your steady application to work, and I have left you to make your own way, you will believe, I hope, not from indifference, but because I knew in the end, it would be better for you, and that if you had to strive for what you won, you would make more of a man, than if you were to slip into a place made ready for you; but now, I think you will not be harmed by a little helping, so tell me frankly your plans for the future." And the old gentleman looked kindly at the young man, who was so unlike, except in his open brow, frank smile, and speaking eyes, to the ruddy-faced lad who had stood before him five years ago. Paul's reply

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was given in a few simple, well-chosen words, the substance of which were, that if possible, when the autumn came, and he ceased working at the stipulated salary for which he was till then engaged, he hoped to secure books to illustrate at a fair price, which would give him work for the early morning, and evening hours. He also hoped to obtain three or four scholars in drawing, and thus defray the expense of a quarter's lessons in oil painting, that he needed, before he began to work into a picture, glowing with color, a little study, which, he said, "I hope to have ready for the next spring exhibition, when, through Mr. Elliott's promised influence, I think it will be entered," and a smile, one of those contradictory smiles, which are made partly of hope, partly of fear, flitted across his face, as he added, "and perhaps, it may find a purchaser."

And then, overstepping his wonted reticence, he disclosed to Mr. Gilbert the after hope, the dream of his youth, a year's study

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and work in that far-away city of art, in the mother-land of picture makers. As he concluded, the color suddenly faded from his face, the animation was gone from voice and eye, for like the touch of an icy-cold hand, came the thought, What then? Return to his own country; but who would there be to welcome him; who to rejoice over his success? (for Paul was young, and success is wont to crown the visions of youth;) and quick as only thought can fly, he stood beside that lonely grave on the dreary hillside; beside that other grave in the sheltered nook, close by where the rippling water flowed; and he realized the youth of scarce twenty-one years, that those silent places were the only homes he had, all the broad world over. But he realized another truth that morning, the blessed truth, that wherever he went, he had a spirit Home now, that his heart was in the keeping of the Lord Christ. Perhaps Mr. Gilbert guessed something of what was passing in Paul's mind, for he said, with unusual kindness,

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"A well planned future, Foster; I prophecy for it a sequel of success. If you go as you hope abroad for study, many I doubt not will welcome your return, but none with more pleasure than I; and now that you have given me your confidence, I will tell you some plans I have been making, though they are much the same as your own; first, we will annul our agreement for the coming six months, and after next week I will pay you according to the work you do; this will greatly increase your means." And Mr. Gilbert stretched his hand across the table, taking up a roll of manuscript as he said.

"These are to be illustrated. I will entrust them to you, paying"—and he mentioned a liberal sum. "You will, thus, soon be able to take the lessons you desire in oils, and who knows, but that instead of waiting till spring, your study may be a picture ready for the autumn exhibition!"

As Paul began to utter his thanks, Mr. Gilbert interrupted him, saying,

"Wait, I have another piece of good for-

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tune to tell you; my niece, Miss Murray, is wanting a drawing teacher, and I have recommended you. You had better call on her mother this afternoon, so I will excuse you from work. Here is the address," and he handed Paul a card, saying, "As for the more distant future, we will talk of that a little later. I may think it well to advance you a certain sum, sufficient for that European dream," and again he smiled; "but we must see how the picture is received at the exhibition first, for, as I said, the borrower is always in bondage to the lender, so I must not advance you money, unless I see a way for you to refund it; and, you are unused yet, Foster, to handling brush and palette; you may find unexpected difficulties."

"Yes," replied Paul, though he felt no foreboding, so sure was he that color would be to him an inspiration, rather than a difficulty to be conquered.

"And now you may return to your morning's work," said Mr. Gilbert, with a wave

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of his hand, as Paul once more endeavored to express his thanks.

Paul had only been absent from his work-table half an hour, and yet, how much had come to him in that time, just as brief little minutes are wont to come to us all, freighted with life-lasting gifts which leave upon the soul marks of happiness or sorrow, marks which no after years can quite efface, and yet only a few minutes it takes them to accomplish this work.

Thinking thus, Paul's hand was strangely unsteady as he began to wreathe the Easter Collect; or, perhaps, it may have been, memories of those lonely far separated graves were wakened in his mind again, as he read the Resurrection morning words; the words that opened out to him as a flowery path, through sunlit land the time,

> "When the child shall find its mother,
> And the mother finds the child."

Or it may have been the wonderful assurance: "Christ has overcome death and

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opened unto us the gate of everlasting life," which was illuminated to him that morning with a new light and depth of meaning. Whatever it may have been, his heart was thrilled with a quiet peace and joy never known before.

"It is so beautiful," he said to himself, "to really know it all comes from the Father of the fatherless;" and then he began to wonder, as thousands have done after coming into the Light, where all his doubts and fears had gone to, all the speculative queries as to the realness of the Christian's hope. Where had they vanished to, those thoughts of years? He could not, even if he would, summon them up again, thin and graspless as the air they seemed. Was it always so? Did just the coming in *faith* always lead to the *seeing?* Would it lead at length to the highest vision of all-seeing and knowing? Very softly he whispered—"Yes, for all mystery is solved in Christ, all sorrow in Him finds its solution."

Would Paul's faith ever cling thus to the

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Lord Christ? It is such a different thing to trust in the Light than to cling in the darkness!

While Paul's thoughts were thus busy, his pencil had wreathed the Collect with fringed-leaved primroses; but they were such quiet little blossoms, fitter emblems of patience they seemed than of the exultant joy which belongs to the Easter-day; and he interwove his wreath with open-eyed crocuses, the brave little flowers that push their way up through the frosty earth in earliest spring, bidding us rejoice, for the glad world of blooming flowers will wake up soon.

"You have made your wreath," said Mr. Elliott, who had entered unobserved, and was looking over Paul's shoulder, "for city dwellers; it bears the stamp, Foster, of the last five years, during which your first 'out-door' glimpses of spring flowers have been through iron railings, enclosing narrow court-yards, with the inevitable background of brick walls. Have you forgotten the

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sweet children of the spring, whose delicate hues vie with pearly tints of ocean shells—the wild flowers, that are upspringing all the broad world over at this resurrection season? Have you forgotten that 'underneath the withered leaves' on the hill-side and roadway fair flowers are growing?"

"Forgotten them! No, indeed," answered Paul, and for a second he closed his eyes, as though to make more vivid the vision of the May flowers he had long ago searched through woodland and meadow to find.

"No one who has ever sought them, I think, can forget it, Mr. Elliott," he continued. "I can hear it now, the breeze stirring amid the boughs of the forest trees soon to be robed in tender green. I can feel the cool, damp touch of the dead leaves we used to push aside as we looked for the little flowers."

More gently than Paul had ever heard him speak, Mr. Elliott said—

"Do you know the trailing arbutus

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verse?" and, as Paul shook his head, he repeated-

> "Walk life's dark path, they seem to say
> With love's divine foreknowing,
> That where man sees but withered leaves,
> God sees the sweet flowers growing."

They were quiet for a little while after Mr. Elliott ceased speaking, till presently he began to question Paul in regard to his interview with Mr. Gilbert.

All this time Paul's pencil had been rapidly moving up and down as he drew the sketch for the page opposite the primrose and crocus wreathed Collect. It was only a little thing, a lonely boy walking at nightfall across a dreary plain, yet the boy was smiling and looking up, while in his hand he held a flower, on which a ray of light from a far-away star fell, lovingly nestling in among the leaves of the opening blossom. It was a simple design, so simple forsooth, Mr. Elliott wondered at the eager look on Paul's face as he bent over it, for he did not know that through the little sketch Paul

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expressed in a shadowy way, half unintelligible even to himself, the emotions stirring his heart, neither did Mr. Elliot understand why Paul wrote in tiny letters the words, "A Father of the fatherless" in the corner, where the artist's name was wont to be inscribed.

Yet, though Mr. Elliott was called by those who knew him a man of the world, he was not all out of sympathy with Paul that morning, as the brief verse he had quoted plainly revealed.

Just as the sketch was completed the noon-time "rest hour" was heralded in by twelve sharp strokes from a neighboring church clock.

"No more work for me to-day," said Paul, as he laid aside pencil and paper, "though this is not work, but pleasure," he added, as he smiled at the little picture, as though the mute thing could comprehend his look. He and Mr. Elliott passed through the outer room and into the street together, lingering for a few words at the corner, where their ways separated.

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"You must write, Foster," said Mr. Elliott, "to your old friend and schoolmaster, and tell him of your good fortune."

"Old friend!" how pleasant the term sounded to Paul, who had so few friends; it often made him sad to think how few, for many changes had come to those he had left in Tomkinsville.

"You would scarcely meet a familiar face were you to walk through our village street," kind Mrs. Blake (who had never lost her interest in him) wrote, "so many of the mill hands have gone, some to seek more lucrative situations, while others have passed to the 'still place up on the hillside.'"

The minister too, and his little wife, had drifted on the ever-changing tide of parishes, to a larger, though perchance not happier, home.

And Mr. Gray had left the Academy long ago; yet Paul knew, spite all these changes, there were hearts who would be glad to hear of his well-doing; and as he parted

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from Mr. Elliott he thought, "I will write and tell Mrs. Blake, and Mr Gray too, of my plans, and the other great and good news, the Peace I have found at last; and then he began to wonder whether all their interest in him, a lonely, desolate, orphan boy, came from their much pondering of that word of Christ's, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me;" and their kindness never had seemed half so precious to Paul as it did now that he recognized it as a tribute of love to Him—their Lord Christ.

Absorbed in these thoughts the walk to Mrs. Forbes' house seemed over in a minute. As he entered the door, she called out, "What's the matter, that you are home at this time of day?"

And he had only half told her the history of his interview with Mr. Gilbert, and the call he was to make on Mrs. Murray, before, woman like, she had started off upstairs, to take a motherly look at his somewhat scanty supply of collars and wristbands, "which

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may need buttons," she said, with a smile, as Paul remonstrated, saying, "They are all in order Mrs. Forbes," though, for almost the first time in his life, a faint tinge of color flushed his face, as he thought of his much worn best suit, and contrasted it with Mr. Elliott's shining broad cloth, and smooth linen. It was over in a moment, and yet it had dawned, and dawn leads on to full light, the knowledge, that he was very shabby—a penniless young man.

"But we have something better than clothes and money," he said to Mrs. Forbes, with a glowing face, as an hour later he ran down into the kitchen to bid her good-bye.

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VIII.

IT was a long walk to Mrs. Murray's, longer than Paul had thought, yet he felt half regretful, as he noted the shining numbers on the door plates were nearing the one written on the card Mr. Gilbert had given him.

Except on Sundays, and during the brief noon hours, he was so unused to being free to enjoy the full glory of mid-day beauty, every step of the way had been a pleasure. The day too was very lovely, one of those early spring days, when even in the city, a halo of soft brightness seems to enshroud all unsightly things; when, spite the rumbling of wheels, the dull ceaseless roar of busy struggling life, the little birds chirped so cheerily, their happy notes refused to be

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merged and lost amid the discordant sounds. Over the leafless gaunt branches of the disrobed trees too, which bordered the wide avenue leading to Mrs. Murray's house, a delicate veil of tender misty green rested, while the court-yards were bright with upspringing grass. It was such a beautiful pleasure, also, to lift his gaze up to the deep blue above, which imparted an intense sense of rest to Paul's soul that day, even though it was framed in by long blocks of monotonous brown-stone dwellings.

"I am glad it is so clear," he said, "though I know clouds must come," and as he walked along with uplifted eyes, before his heart's gaze passed a vision of a sunset the spring-time before his father died; he recalled how one moment, the clouds were glowing with golden and rosy hues, the next were dark and gloomy; how they came trooping one after the other from over beyond the hills, and then vanished almost as suddenly as they came. Why did they come? Where did they go? Paul could

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not answer his own questions, but it was the sun that dispelled them, that I know he thought, with a smile, as he stood before the door of Mrs. Murray's spacious home, and, "if the will is the sun of the mind," only when that is feeble, can clouds come to obscure the light. But he shook his head after a second's thought, at his own logic, for he was walking now, in the rays of the light that recognized that there are clouds, which only faith can illumine, clouds, which no strength of man's unaided will, can dispel, which can only vanish as we possess that which is beyond good fortune, even the light that knows no horizon boundaries, but shines ever with a calm peaceful beam in the soul.

The opening of the door, the sound of his own voice, as he asked for Mrs. Murray, and handed Mr. Gilbert's card to the waiter, (whose well trained eye seemed to take in with one glance, the worn coat, the patched boots, and mended gloves, which Mrs. Forbes had pronounced all right,) re-

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called Paul somewhat harshly to the present.

Yet, who can tell, but that the hasty, so abruptly ended look up toward the overarching blue, the brief glimpse of budding trees, and upspringing grass, had yielded sympathy as sweet and rest-laden to his soul, as he could have found out under the expanse of sky, looked at from hill-top or plain, or from the generous leafing of numberless trees, out where the trees grow in forest freedom, or from the thousand grass blades nestled close to one another, in the broad meadows, that reached far up the sunlighted hill slopes that surrounded his early home. For, just here, is manifested the great tenderness of the Father, who can, through nature, speak to His children, not only in the quiet country, but in the noisy city as well.

And Paul was as truly lifted into spiritual harmony with the cloudless blue of the sky, his thoughts meanwhile becoming as pure, deep, and firm as they would have done had

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his gaze been farther reaching, for as some one has well said,

"Like a prayer offered up in the midst of every-day life, these short fond gazes at nature, have something inconceivably sooth ing and beautiful in them."

As he followed the softly treading servant through the long hall, Paul felt almost as though he were taking an inlook into some undreamed-of enchanted place, for, like fairy land seemed the glimpses he caught through wide open doors of spacious rooms, while the tempered light, the sweet odor of flowers, and rippling song of birds, enhanced the magical charm. It seemed so unlike the world where he lived and worked, and yet he knew, only the turning a corner or two, hardly farther than a stone's throw off, from all this beauty, wealth and luxury, were desolate homes, dreary tenement houses, where lived and died too, suffering poverty-stricken people, who scarcely ever knew the coming of a flower, a bird song, or the breath of sweet odor to steal

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with tender soothing into their rugged lives. As these thoughts came to him, he trembled, for was it coming back, the old query, "Is He a God of love?" and then Paul started at his own footfall, so heavily it fell upon the soft carpet, which smothered all ordinary sound even of men's tread. Somehow, he felt, as though by stepping hard he could crush out the vivid contrast of his present surroundings with the outside world, and he smiled at the creaking of his own oft-patched boots,—smiled, while he seemed to hear, repeated by an unseen whisperer, the verse, "'The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head," for though Paul did not then define it, he recognized the great nearness, that poverty, suffering, and even homelessness, gives to those who know through the patient enduring of them, peculiar intimacy with the earthly life of Him, who knows all about such needs. So, just while passing from door to door, the Father solved

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the question, "Can He be love, and yet, let all these sharp contrasts in life exist?" Making it plain to Paul, that while all are precious in the sight of the Lord Christ, on the poor and sorrowful He looks with special tenderness—the tenderness of having shared every hardship they can know. Which then is the richest heritage, poverty and suffering, or wealth and prosperity? he thought, just as he was ushered into the presence of Mrs. Murray.

He had no time to answer his question, but, he never was troubled again by the seeming injustice of the unchosen positions and destinies allotted to men in this world, he always felt satisfied to leave the enigma of "Why, is it thus," with the Lord, "*who knows.*"

Mrs. Murray was a gentle, pale-faced lady, with a soft low voice; one of those dainty ladies, whom we only find in homes of luxury; everything about her from the tiny slippered foot, to the white jeweled hand, from the graceful folds of the silver

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grey silk she wore, (the silk too costly to rustle) to the faint pink bows of gauzy ribbon, that were half concealed in the gossamer lace of her cap, seemed in some magical way, to share in the charm which pervaded her every motion, yet it was a charm, undefined as the perfume of flowers.

She rose to meet Paul as he entered, extending her hand with that nameless grace, which is the peculiar possession of the gently reared, and which no outward polish can ever quite successfully counterfeit. We all know what it is, that strange little something in manner, that money cannot buy,—the something, which greets us now and then from shabbily-robed gentlewomen, "the lady's way of shaking hands," not diamonds and sparkling jewels can teach it, not broad estates or coupons, and yet, as Paul met Mrs. Murray, the *true* gentleman-hood, (open and free to all, just as the true lady-likeness is,) shown in his manner, and while she was a lady by the right of wealth and a life spent in the enjoyment of luxury and

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ease, he as truly was a gentleman by the possession of a soul, pure in thought, word and deed.

"Pray be seated, Mr. Foster," were Mrs. Murray's greeting words, as she glided into a cushioned arm chair, the crimson velvet covering of which made a fitting back ground for her graceful figure, and straightway, without once seeming to observe Paul, though in reality not his slightest movement escaped her, she began to talk of art, music, and poetry, and he listened spell-bound, not that what she said was new to him, only the way of saying it, seemed like hearing the daintiest, softest song from some spirit-like bird of gay plumage—a song wanting perchance in the very notes that are most fraught with true music, and yet withal, wondrous sweet and enchaining.

From pictures, she passed on to speak of why Paul was there, saying:

"It is so kind of you, Mr. Foster, to be willing to instruct my daughter, it will be of such service to her."

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And Paul was bewildered. "Kind of him!" he thought the kindness was in Mrs. Murray's employing him, not in his giving the lessons, but she shook her head, with one of those strange little nods, that are the prerogative of society ladies, as he attempted to express it was he who was grateful. The arrangement of hours for the lessons, and terms of payment, were next touched upon with scarce more than lightest touch, for,

"All will be satisfactory, I am quite sure, Mr. Foster," the lady asserted; "and Monday at eleven, you will come, and my daughter, Miss Agnes, will be ready for you. And now perhaps," she continued, "if you can spare an hour from your hurried life, for I know you are occupied every moment of the day, in drawing the exquisite little sketches which delight us indolent mortals, "do, I beg you, spend it in the picture gallery;" and thus, she indicated to Paul, it was time for his call to end, gently saying, "May I trouble you to touch the bell," and Paul, who was like one in a

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dream, instinctively rose, following the direction of the lady's look, while with touch so slight, it hardly seemed to stir the gold and crimson silk cord, he obeyed Mrs. Murray's request.

Benjamin appeared almost instantly in answer to the summons, and bowed low as his mistress commanded,

"Show Mr. Foster to the picture gallery, Benjamin." Turning to Paul, she said, "You will not object to visiting it alone, Mr. Foster, but I know you will not, for," and she smiled, "the very presence of color and pictures will, I am sure, afford all the companionship you desire," and then, with another touch of the jeweled hand, a gentle reminder, "Do not forget Monday at eleven," Paul's first interview with Mrs. Murray was over.

She was correct in thinking he would not be lonely, when among the pictures; correct in thinking, the next hour would be one of rare enjoyment to him.

It was the first time he had been in a pri-

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vate gallery, and very grateful was the sense of seclusion, and undisturbed leisure to look and enjoy. It was almost the first time too, he had gazed at pictures by daylight, as his visits to the Autumn and Spring-time art exhibitions, to which Mr. Elliott always sent him a ticket of admission, were made generally in the evening.

He walked up and down the gallery several times, hardly knowing where to begin to look. He felt like a child suddenly left free from restraint, in the midst of gay blooming flower-beds, whose little hands touch first one, and then another of the opening beauties, irresolute which to choose, and after all, selects some modest "wee crimson-tipped daisy," or lowly growing lily bell, rather than blushing rose or stately camelia, for in the end it was a simple picture Paul lingered before—an unframed picture, that stood upon a richly carved easel, just where the strongest light that shone into the gallery could fall upon it. What was it that attracted him to choose thus, while the walls on

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either side were hung with massive gilded framed treasures?—paintings by old masters, side by side with the achievements of modern artists, wonderful views of strange lands, glowing reflections of sunset, and sunrise glories, snow clad hills, rainbow-banded icebergs floating through the dark green of mid ocean waves; flowery vales there were too. Portraits also of far-famed musicians, laurel crowned poets, and world-renowned picture painters, why did Paul turn from all these to stand before the unframed canvas? He searched the leaves of the printed catalogue he held to find the artist's name, to find the title of the picture, but neither artist's name nor picture were recorded there.

It was a simple composition, though rich in color, portraying the fanciful, yet pretty custom described in Moore's Lalla Rookh, of the Eastern maidens, who are wont to test the fate of their absent loved ones, by launching a lighted lamp on the rivers of their country. The picture represented "a

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dreary solitude, where no sign of human habitations were visible, where the rocky banks of the river looked dark and desolate against the twilight of the sky. Kneeling down in an easy attitude, a young girl, earnestly watched her tiny lamp, burning brightly as it passed down the stream, throwing a radiance on its surface, and auguring well for its successful voyage; above her shone a brilliant star, indicative of hope, which also cast its reflection on the river from the horizon to the foreground, foreshadowing the course that her lamp seemed disposed to take. The head of the maiden was finely modeled, though the mass of dark hair caused it to look somewhat large, the face was very beautiful, though a sad almost anxious expression shone on it, which was necessary to retain the point of the story, on which it was founded."

could not forget all through the rehours of the day the far away look of that pictured face; not

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even as he walked through the crowded streets did it leave him, and when late at night he was alone in his little room, it came back. "I cannot tell why," he said, but something in the look of those eyes has made my mother seem near. He fell asleep thinking of it, waking at midnight, from a life-like dream, in which he had seemed to be walking by the lake-side once again, just as he used to walk when a little boy, holding his mother's hand tightly, while they looked out over the placid water, on which a silvery ray of light shone, falling from the crescent moon, and then, before him, seemed to float a fairy child, with eyes like those that looked from the picture,—a beckoning child, who vanished just as the moon slipped away behind the hills.

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IX.

THE days intervening between his call, and the Monday on which the drawing lessons to Miss Murray were to begin, passed rapidly to Paul; indeed he could hardly believe as he ran up the broad stone-steps leading to the house, and followed Benjamin through the long hall, that almost a week had gone by since he was there. He was shown into the same room as then, where awaiting his coming, he found Mrs. Murray, whose greeting was gentle and cordial as on his previous visit.

After a few minutes' easy conversation, she said:

"We will go into the library and join my daughter."

Paul dreaded more than he was willing to acknowledge even to himself, the introduc-

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tion to Miss Murray, and, half reluctantly he followed her mother, for he was so unused to ladies' society, and the dwellers in these avenue mansions seemed to him such sunshine, picture-like creations, viewing them as he had only, passing to and fro on the broad thoroughfares of the city, or alighting from carriage or phæton, to trip with dainty steps into shops whose windows seemed like kaleidoscopes, with their display of bright colors and wondrous fabrics. And while Paul realized, Miss Murray would merely regard him in the light of a drawing-master, he had been painfully conscious all the morning of his worn clothes, and unpolished manners.

But he forgot all about himself the moment he stood before her, forgot everything except that the eyes which had haunted him ever since he had looked upon the pictured face the week before, were now fixed upon him, kindly shining with the full light of a breathing, living soul,—and, that a voice, clear as the note of fairy bell, uttered

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words addressed to him in a soft low tone, which Mrs. Murray interrupted by asking,

"Did you notice the portrait of my daughter, Mr. Foster, when you visited the gallery, an unframed picture standing on an easel? I fully intended directing your attention to it, for we desire criticism to test the truth of the likeness, especially from cultured art observers," and she smiled graciously at Paul, as though quite unconscious of his being a penniless youth, with art education all incomplete.

"Yes," replied Paul, "I noticed it;" and his sentence ended abruptly, which caused Mrs. Murray to think, he is embarrassed by the new position in which he finds himself, and which caused her daughter to lift her eyes inquiringly to the young man's face, across which she saw the shadow of a smile flitting, a smile, that months afterwards she remembered.

A few minutes later the lesson began, and for the next hour only brief words were spoken by either teacher or scholar, though

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Mrs. Murray occasionally looked up from the volume she was languidly reading, to make some trifling remark.

Agnes Murray was very unlike her mother, as Paul discovered the morning of their first meeting, unlike in character and appearance, yet she possessed the same graceful tact of manner, which at once made rich and poor feel at ease with her, though she was quiet, almost reserved. When the lesson was ended, she exchanged hardly a word with Paul, beyond a "good morning," and, "you will come again Mr. Foster on Wednesday."

As he passed through the crowded street on his way to the establishment, (where Mr. Gilbert had given him permission to continue his work in the 'little room,') over and over Paul asked himself, "What is she like?" —and he was powerless to tell—he, who was wont to take in at a glance, outline of form and faintest tinge of color. Were her eyes blue or brown? he did not know; the shade of the wavy plentiful hair, he could not tell

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it; nor the shape of rosy lips or pure brow; he only knew that as he looked at her, he "wished himself a better man," wished all those years of darkling questions, of distrust in God's love had been differently spent, "Because her girlish innocence, the grace of her unblemished pureness, wrought in him a longing and aspiring."

And thus before many weeks had gone by, he had enthroned her as queen in the holy citadel of his earnest young heart, where she reigned beside the memory of his mother all through the remaining years of his life—

"Invested with all the beauties that she had,
And all the virtues, that he rightly took for granted."

It was a new life he led for the next few months, a life fitting the glad spring-time season, and the deep peaceful beauty of the summer; for the lessons did not end, even after the city was deserted for the cool freshness of country retreats by the Murrays and their friends.

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"Surely you will continue the lessons, Mr. Foster," Mrs. Murray had urged, in her winning way; "coming down to us twice a week?" And she gracefully laid in Paul's hands a check more than sufficient to defray the expense of the not far car-ride to her country home.

And Paul had no wish to say "No" to her request, for he was young, and life seems such a glad, beautiful thing to youth, which never guesses the strife back of that which comes as—

"A stirring of the heart, a quickening keen
Of sight and hearing to the delicate
Beauty and music of an altered world;
. . . . . That mysterious light,
Which doth reveal, and yet transform; which gives
Destiny, sorrow, youth, and death, and life
Intenser meaning; in disquieting
Lifts up; a shining light: men call it Love."

Paul worked hard those days, but work seemed play to him. At early morning and late at night he bent over pencil sketches for the illustrated books, while through the mid-day hours he toiled with never a

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thought of weariness over the "little study," which was rapidly developing into a picture for the autumn exhibition. Between these times of solitary labor shone like brightest jewels the hours of the drawing lessons.

Miss Murray had proved an apt scholar.

"Soon," he said to her one August day, "you will know all I can teach."

"No, not all," she replied; and Paul knew what she meant full well, for something besides their pencils had been busy during those lesson hours.

Quite naturally they had fallen into the way of discussing those questions which are ever up-springing in the minds of the young. They had talked of poetry and then of science till they had passed on to that, which, like a forest-covered mountain uprising from a sandy plain, or green island, in the midst of weary waste of shoreless waters, meets every truth-seeking soul, offering rest for weariness—rest beneath the "shadow of a great Rock." And when they had talked of these deeper needs of the heart, Paul, who

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was wont to linger far behind, while Agnes murmured to him sweet strains of poets' songs, led the way, for of the gospel story he could tell as of that which he *knew*.

And the young girl listened eagerly as she could have done had his words been of palace, or kingly throne, while he told the simple story of the Bethlehem shepherds, or pictured for her in glowing words, (for though slow in speech when telling of other things, Paul was strangely gifted when the Lord Christ and the Bible were his themes,) the repentant son returning to his father's house, welcomed as one dead, but alive again; or the merchant travelling into a far country, entrusting the precious talents to the faithful and unfaithful servants. And then, sometimes he would tell of that land where his mother and father were with Christ; but not often did he picture the heavenly beauty, for he felt the something all who seek to bring others to the knowledge of Christ must feel, the danger of winning souls to seek Heaven, for the sake

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of Heaven, rather than of leading them to the feet of Him whose command is "Come." Not for the sake of after-time glory and peace; but "Come" because He calls "Come to Me," the crucified, the despised and rejected of men.

It was very strange the way in which they helped one another, these two young creatures who were so different, — very curious the crossing and the meeting of the rays of light, which emanated from spiritual and educational centres so outwardly far separated.

Was there some golden thread binding their destinies together, without the meeting of which the peculiar development of their characters could not be completed? We cannot tell, for no theory or philosophy can fathom the "why," of friendship or love, can decipher the strange hieroglyphics of the soul, that are enigmas to one, yet plain to another.

They were left much alone, for Mrs. Murray felt hedged in by the safe barrier of

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custom and social position (the barrier which walls up many a cloudless horizon of love;) Agnes would never for a moment regard Paul as more than a drawing teacher, who had become a kind helpful friend, (and of Paul, Mrs. Murray did not think,) and the mother was correct—Agnes did not regard him as more, nor did she think of his feeling differently to her till it was too late to undo what she had unconsciously done. For Paul had "the gift which speaks the deepest things most simply;" so for weeks she never thought what were behind the few words he now and then let fall. Yet at the same time, by an intuitive sense of that which she did not define, she grew more thoughtful, meeting his half-uttered words by quickly passing on to other topics. And thus Paul might have known she did not love him, yet he was content in the present, without fear or hope, just drifting on the smooth waters of happiness.

And the summer drew towards its close, as all summers do. It was the day of the

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last lesson, a bright, sunshiny afternoon, and by Mrs. Murray's invitation he tarried to spend it with them in wandering through the flower-bordered walks, in treading the smooth, velvety lawns, or resting on rustic seat, beneath the shade of graceful elm or stately oak. They looked far off to the distant city spires, and traced the faint blue line of the yet more distant ocean; while in between lay green fields, verdant hill-slopes, terraced gardens, winding lanes and broad roads, while dotted here and there were tasteful villas, old time farm-houses, and cheerful white-painted box-like homes.

It was an afternoon full of delight to Paul, even though it was the last time he was to be there.

"Come," said Agnes, and her mother did not say "nay," "and I will show you what you will like better than this far away view." So Paul followed the white-robed maiden through a winding pathway, which led under the shade of green vines and thick growing trees.

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He was very silent, his heart was beating with memories in which longings for his mother, were blended in, with vague recollections of the dream he had the night after he first looked upon the picture of the young girl kneeling by the river, on which the little lamp of hope had been just launched. Why did it come back to him then? Why did he seem to see the tiny hand of that dream-child, beckoning him onward, — and yet vanishing when he reached out to grasp it?

He started involuntarily when Agnes turned to him, asking, in the peculiar tone which was all her own, "Tell me, do you feel towards trees as I do, Mr. Foster? as though it were a melancholy thing to have them fall beneath the ruthless ax, or to transplant them to a soil different from that in which they have grown all their lives long, for I do not believe new soil can ever seem home to them. Do you, Mr. Foster?" and she smiled—but only for a second—for Paul's voice sounded sharp, almost harsh as he replied,

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"You are right, Miss Murray, a new soil, either to flower or tree, must seem un-home-like," and then, after a moment's silence, as though by an effort, he continued to speak of trees, saying,

"I know of nothing in nature so formed to be the symbol of desire as trees, there is generally an extraordinary character of anxious wish expressed in them, they stand so fixed and cramped in the earth, and yet try so to extend their branches as far as possible beyond the bounds of their roots, like man, who with all his apparent freedom, is very much in the same state," and again, there was a faint tinge of bitterness in Paul's tone.

But Agnes did not heed his concluding words, for eagerly she exclaimed, "See, this is the place, Mr. Foster. Is it not beautiful?"

A sudden turn of the path had brought them into a wild little nook, where nature had been left free. A tangled dell where flowers grew in spring, through which a stilly stream crept with faintest ripple, on

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whose banks alders, willows, wild grape and creeping vines were interwoven, in whose waters, lilies, tall reeds, and waving grasses grew, while out beyond gleamed the open fields gemmed with buttercups and daisies. A great boulder, which seemed dropped from some long ago rock period, lifted its rugged sides up from the bed of the stream, a barren rock, round which no vine clung for support, on which no misty green of moss or umber tuft of lichen grew, but on its top where sunbeams would fall at early morning, had nestled in a jagged crevice, a few fallen leaves, from an overhanging maple, a few pine needles from a close growing forest tree; drifted there too, by March tempest, or wild wind of summer thunder storm, dust had mixed with the mouldering leaves;—and perchance—dropped from beak of quick-winged mother bird, carrying food to the hungry chirpers awaiting her coming, or borne on evening breeze from woody dale, or flowery meadow, some little seed vessels had found their way into

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this patch of nourishment up on the rock's summit, from which a clump of green leaves had up-sprung, whose tiny stems were tipped with graceful nodding harebells.

"Oh, look!" Agnes said, clapping her hands in delight, "See even the barren rock has a flower."

And Paul, he saw—while over his face stole the shadowy smile, that Agnes had seen the first day they met.

It was nearing twilight when they turned homeward, the rose bloom was beginning to fade from the sky, the glow worms were flitting in and out from the underwood, the lawn too grew dusky, while a faint amber light shown over the near landscape, and the far away was hidden in violet shadows.

Mrs. Murray met them, wondering where they had been, playfully chiding them as loiterers, and then it was time for Paul to return to the city.

'I will not see you again till the picture is hung at the art exhibition," were Agnes' parting words to him, as she smiled a

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friendly farewell. And Paul,—he walked through the deepening twilight, down the green bank sided road with a great content in his heart, even though he had just parted from Agnes, even though bitter thoughts had stirred his mind that day, for,—

It was late when he reached his attic room, and yet he lit a light, and bent over his table till the grey drawn was beginning to steal over the sleep-enfolded city,—though on his paper, after all his labor, he did not leave a picture—only a lonely rock—a gray dreary rock, lit up by just one gleam of sunshine, that fell and rested among the leaves of an opening flower growing on its summit.

"To-morrow," he said, "I will touch it with color," and, even as he spoke, the morrow was there.

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X.

IF after that sunshiny afternoon spent with Agnes Murray, out under the blue sky, where the air was laden with perfume from clover field and opening flowers, musical with hum of insect and song of bird, Paul was conscious that something had come into his life, which never would leave him; he had no time to indulge in reverie, or dream of a golden future, for hardly had the sun travelled round to noon-time the next day, before he was in the midst of unlooked for events.

On his plate at breakfast, he found a note from Mr. Gilbert, requesting him to call at his house; he also found two letters; one bearing the Tompkinsville post-mark, proved to be from Mrs. Blake, the other was from Mr. Grey.

Both letters were in reply to the brief

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notes Paul had sent weeks before, telling them of the Peace that filled his heart, now that he had learned, through trusting in Christ, the *rest* of *knowing* the Lord as a Father. They both expressed regret at their long delay in answering that which had made them so sincerely glad. Mrs. Blake wrote as she talked, kind motherly words, manifesting true sympathy.

Mr. Grey's letter was closely written and many paged, and Paul after a hasty glance, put it into his pocket saying: "I will read it at noon, when I have more time."

It was still quite early in the morning when he rang the bell at Mr. Gilbert's; he was asked directly into the cheerful breakfast-room, where he found Mr. Gilbert alone, as his family were, like all the avenue people, out of town.

He welcomed Paul cordially, saying, "You will begin to regard a summons to my presence, as the sure prelude to some project influencing your future; read this, it will explain why I sent for you," and he

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handed Paul a foreign stamped letter, watching with interest his expressive face as he read it.

The letter was from Rome, written by an artist friend of Mr. Gilbert, who had secured for that gentleman, some marred, half defaced relics of ancient art, which needed to be copied by a skillful colorist, and patient workman, who would throw his strength and heart into the task, not for the sake of remuneration in a moneyed way, as much as for securing to art, distinct representations of the every year mouldering and fading glimpses of a past age.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Mr. Gilbert, as Paul thoughtfully folded and handed back the letter; "what do you think of undertaking the work?"

Paul hesitated before answering, which his employer noticing, said,

"Take till night to decide; come about six with your answer; that will give me time to mail a letter by to-morrow's steamer; for if you do not undertake the work, I

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will commission my friend to employ some artist already in Rome. If you go, you will need to sail about the middle of November, so there will be ample time for you to finish the picture for the exhibition, first, and to know its fate, too. Think of the plan seriously, Foster; it is a fine opening in an art-way, though poor enough so far as money making is concerned; of course I will advance you the sum necessary for the journey."

After leaving Mr. Gilbert, Paul sought the seclusion of his attic room, rather than going to the little studio, where he was wont to spend the morning hours. He wondered at himself, that he hesitated even for a moment in accepting an offer, which opened to him, the realization of his life-long dream. Why was it? And standing in the sunlight which shone full into his room, for it looked eastward, he asked himself, "Would he have hesitated, had he never met Agnes Murray?" and his gaze fell on the pencil sketch he had made the

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night before, of the barren rock, and the solitary flower blooming on its summit. Was it a symbol picture of his life? Was that brief summer, those quickly passed lesson hours spent with Agnes, to be the only heart blossoms he was to know? Must he go away across the wide ocean, and never see her all through the coming years? And then, the youngness of his heart and mind, pictured another future—return to his native land, crowned with honor and success, welcomed by Agnes with smiles. "But, life is graver than these boyish imaginings," he presently said, and he tried to look resolutely in the face, the impossibility of ever being more to Agnes than he was now, but never yet could youth easily ring the verdict of its own lonely fate, never yet easily believe the "It cannot be."

It was not like Paul to linger thus in indecision, and half impatiently he exclaimed, "Why can't I decide? Here it has come to me, just what I have been wanting all my life, and I hesitate in accepting it."

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But after all, Paul was not unlike the rest of us in his indecision, for, is it not so often with us in our earthly wants? We stretch our hands out, like children, eager for some new treasure; and, when our Father gives it,—like the children, we see glowing still another treasure, more to be desired than that which seemed priceless to us, while just beyond our grasp.

At that minute Paul remembered Mr. Grey's letter. "Perhaps it will help me," he thought, and though the sunlight was stealing from his room, reminding him the morning was speeding away, he sat down all unmindful of work, and for an hour, spite the five years of separation, he felt drawn very close to his former school-teacher, for there is that in some written pages, which well merits the old proverb, "A letter is half a meeting." There was nothing like preaching or dictating in it, yet Mr. Grey impressed upon Paul the duty of reverencing and consecrating the gifts God had given him, by the use of mind, heart, and hand, to

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His, the Lord Christ's glory. He wrote, "You can so, truly acknowledge Him as your Master, in your chosen profession, for truth and purity of thought and deed may be revealed even in the least sketch you make. Reflect too, on the influence of pictures ever since in long ago ages, canvass first began to glow with illustrations of sacred subjects, which served as open pages easy to be read, by learned and unlearned alike;" and then, just as had been Mr. Grey's wont, when he talked with Paul, he intervaled counsel with some shining truth, deep with spiritual significance. "Do you know," he wrote, "the first recorded representation of our Saviour is in the character of the Good Shepherd?"

And Paul laid down the letter, while he seemed to hear softly murmured the Good Shepherd's promise, "I am the door of the sheep; by Me, if any man enter in, he shall *go in, and out, and find pasture.*" Go "in and out"—out, into the wide world,—the jostling, hurrying world—where the strife

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of angry passions, the tumult of discordant aims and selfish ambitions rudely crowded one against the other—could he find pasture there? And, like the touch of a cool hand on a burning brow, came to Paul's memory the Psalmist's song, "The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in." The Lord who will provide pasture fresh and green—"good pasture, upon the high mountains of Israel"—for the weary pilgrim who at His command, "goes out."

"Go in." Paul lingered over these words, repeating them softly. For the going in, surely it meant the entering into communion with Him who leads the soul gently beside still waters and through green pastures of spiritual nourishment. He thought long and earnestly, and before he took up Mr. Grey's letter again he had about decided to "go out" in the way opened for him.

The continuing words of the letter were: "A dignity certainly rests upon your chosen profession, robed as it is in the emblematic, many-colored coat, the mantle of special

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favor shown by the 'Father' to the child of art—art, which has revealed His teachings ever since first representations of Christian faith were painted on wall or ceiling of Roman catacomb or later-day monastery and cathedral.

"But you must remember the maxim, 'Nothing less than first-rate genius ever yet inspired genius.' Work faithfully, then, remembering if all had wide-open eyes to see, none could teach and none could learn. And if it be your lot as an 'interpreter of Nature' only to guide one, toward truth and that faith which recognizes in all beauty the Spirit of God, would it be too small a thing to be worth the struggle and painstaking of a lifetime?" And as though he remembered Paul's fondness for poetry, Mr. Grey had copied the verses—

Spirit of Beauty! Thy presence confessing,
God can we see in a sparkle of ore;
Flowers and shells to our heart are expressing
Love like its own, but transcendently more.

Spirit of Beauty! each bough in its bending,
Skies in their curve, and the sea in its swell,

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Streams as they wind, hills and plains in their blending,
All, in our own, of God's happiness tell.

Spirit of Beauty! Thou soul of our Maker,
Suddenly shown in a gleam or a tint;
O, be each heart of Thy joy a partaker;
Love, and its store, are alike without stint.

Spirit of Beauty! our offering we render;
Thee in Thy skyey dominion we praise;
Lark-like we rise to the shadowless splendor,
Pouring out song as the sun pours his rays."

The letter closed with reference to the constant sense of companionship, with the "Spirit" which was Paul's since the Lord had endowed him with a soul quick to see beauty.

"You never can feel friendless," it said; "for the morning-dawn rays and evening shadows alike will be your companions; the opening buds and blossoms of spring, the falling leaves and fading flowers of autumn, the golden lights of midsummer, and the sober tints of winter skies, will ever be murmuring to you strains of heart-music if through them all you look up to Him."

"If I can always feel thus," and Paul

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spoke aloud, as though he were sealing by utterance the truth of Mr. Grey's letter—"my life may be spent in going in and out as He the Lord Christ leads. And I can always know—

"As an island in a river,
Vexed with ceaseless rave and roar,
Keeps an inner silence ever
On its consecrated shore,
Flowered with flowers and green with grasses;
So the poor through Thee abide,
Every outer care that passes
Deepening more the peace inside."

"A Father of the fatherless, a God of love,—surely He will never leave me alone; surely He will always help me to know this peace," Paul murmured, and a smile lit up his face, though it was shadowed soon; for Paul was young. Life seemed beautiful, and love, love for Agnes, called loudly, "Why go away to a foreign land?"

Yet his decision was made, as he informed Mr. Gilbert, an hour before the clock struck six.

Telling Mrs. Forbes of his plans that

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evening, Paul said: "It seems as though all my boyhood and youth had been laid away to-day. I suppose it is the thought of going so far off, and of beginning life again among strangers."

Yes; that was it. And—something else, too.

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CHAPTER THIRD.

MANHOOD.

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"Not once or twice in our rough island story
The path of duty was the way to glory,
He that walks it only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden roses.

"Not once or twice in our fair island story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He that ever following her commands,
Or with toil of heart, and knees, and hands,
Through the long gorge to the fair light, has won
His path upward and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands,
To which our God himself is moon and sun."

—TENNYSON.

"It is only to our narrow human view, that any thing is lost or wasted. God gave the mind to do a certain work, and withdrew it when that work was done. We, poor innocents, may fancy that something else should have been done. So, assuredly, in all cases, it should; but in no special and separate instance can we say—here is a destiny peculiarly broken, here a work peculiarly unfulfilled. I read that God will say to his good servants, 'Well done!' but not, *Enough done.* It is only He who judges of and appoints that, 'Enough.'"—RUSKIN.

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I.

PAUL FOSTER'S words to Mrs. Forbes —"I feel as though all my boyhood and youth were forever laid away"—were verified during the next six weeks; for while he had comparatively little to bind him to his native land, and not much in the way of preparation to accomplish before sailing, yet every day seemed to him fuller of labor and heart-stirring emotions than the preceding one.

By dint of night-work he succeeded in illustrating an extra volume, which furnished means for a hurried visit to Tompkinsville and W——.

"I cannot go so far away across the ocean," he said to Mrs. Forbes, while something like a smothered sigh sounded in his

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voice, "without going to my early homes once more."

And she knew what he meant. She knew the homes to which he referred were those lonely graves, from which no sound of endearing welcome could greet him.

Paul knew this, too; and yet his heart turned eagerly to the little journey.

"It will be such a pleasure," he said, "to breathe again the mountain air, to listen to the wind, to look at the hills, and wander by the lake, and"—. He left unuttered the deeper yearnings of his heart, continuing to wonder, "Would it seem as it used to?" till so lost did he become in his own thoughts, that he never noticed Mrs. Forbes had left the room, and his only auditor was "Muffy," the sleepy purring cat.

It was the end of October before Paul started on his trip, as the picture for the exhibition had to be completed first—and another little picture, too.

He told Mrs. Forbes he would be absent about a week; but on the fifth day after he

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left, she was startled by hearing his familiar step in the hall, and a minute later his voice calling:

"I am back again."

"What!" she exclaimed; "back so soon! Has any thing happened?"

And Paul answered quite in his usual tone—

"No, nothing; except that I was ready to return sooner than I expected."

But Mrs. Forbes, from his few words, guessed that it had been as she feared it would be, a disappointing visit to Paul. In which impression she was partly correct, for while he had found the lake and the hills around W—— the same, so many changes had been wrought in all the neighborhood, that he had looked in vain for the vine-covered cottage—his childhood's home.

Indeed, he found everywhere on the works of man and among the people, the touch of alteration had been wondrous busy during the time of his absence from W——. Only Nature seemed the same.

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He had sought old Phil, who lived now, they told him, at the tavern, and he found a worn-out, feeble, half-childish old man, who only dimly remembered driving over the hills.

Then he climbed the hill-path, leading to the brown house where his mother's aunt used to live, and he was met with the words:

"If it's Miss Fowler ye'r' looking arter, she sarved out her three-score years and ten, wal! comin' a twelve month next January."

And in reply to his question, "Do you know anything about a spinning-wheel and rocking-chair?" the present occupant of the brown house, who was somewhat "slow of hearing" and querulous withal, shook her head, refusing to reply.

Next he had sought Mrs. Jones, the farmer's wife, again to meet with disappointment. For the man he asked concerning her gruffly answered:

"My sakes! she moved away from these

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'er' parts, I reckon it's going on for half-a-dozen years or thereabout. I ain't no good at calkelatin'." And the man returned to to his work and whistling, which Paul had interrupted.

Shrewd but kindly Dr. Miller was the only one who extended to him a hand of warm greeting; though, to be sure, there were others among the men who gathered round the fireplace at the Inn after nightfall, who remembered Enoch and Faith;—the boy, too, they said. Yet Paul, the young man, was a stranger to them.

Only the little mound by the brook seemed as he had expected, though he had to search before he found the place, so overgrown was it with tangled vines and coarse weeds, which had pushed out of their way the flowers, he and his father had planted with tender care years before.

"But it makes little difference," thought Paul, as the long afternoon, he had spent clearing away the rude growth, drew to a close; "little difference whether it be over-

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grown by flowers or weeds. And yet I would fain think of it as a place in which the sunlight shines, where in spring violets bloom, and birds sing, where the bees hum all day long in midsummer, where in autumn the leaves fall gently, and where in winter the pure snow rests."

There was nought to tempt him to tarry in W——, so the following day, he had started for Tompkinsville, where his visit was even more painful, for, the time of his leaving there, being more recent, he had not anticipated the sense of strangeness which he felt creeping over his heart, as he walked the familiar streets of the town. Like the gray chill of an Autumn night, after the day has been sunshiny and bright, it seemed, he had felt so exultant as he neared the place, picturing to himself, from the very moment when first he spied the factory's tall chimney, and caught the glimmer of the creek, the greeting he would meet from his old friends.

And Mrs. Blake, and one or two of the

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mill hands, did seem unaltered, but the rest were strangers. He sadly missed Mr. Grey too, and it was a weary task, the opening of the old blue chest—the unfolding the old familiar garments. "I almost wish I had not come," he thought the next day, as toward sunset, he stood waiting outside the depot for the express train, he realized so sadly that changes had been as plentiful at Tompkinsville, as at W——. Even the bleak hill-side, where his father's grave had been almost alone, was all changed,—crowded full of graves now.

Paul travelled all through the night; he was wide awake all the time too. It was bright moonlight, and as he leaned back and gazed through the open window, it seemed to him, as though he were passing through a fairy scene; he forgot all about the motion of the cars, he was only conscious, that swift as though on bird-wing he was gliding past a strange, and what seemed, rapid going panorama of spectral elms, rugged oaks, or forest trees, tall wierd pines,

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that seemed to stretch their massive boughs out imploringly ; winding rivers there were too, whose rippling waves sparkled in the moonshine, like fairies dancing, and great mountains, that looked like cloud banks, so high up they appeared, in the magical light.

Or, all unheralded, they speedily had passed through towns and villages, leaving no sign of their presence, beyond the faint echo of a shrill discordant whistle, and all the while, the moon had looked on this shifting ever changing scene, with a calm peaceful light, as though smiling, not scoffingly but pityingly at the foolish earth, that was so restless, and, just so Paul had thought " our Father looks down, and smiles on His children, who are restless, because of the shifting tide of this earthly life ; just so, His presence will go with me, touching if I but recognize it, the darkest days with light, as the moonbeam's touch with brightness, even the roughest, most rock begirt miles through which our onward way leads ;" and, like a tired child, who falls asleep lis-

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tening to sweetest lullaby mother lips ever sang, Paul had felt rested, and at peace, as he looked forth on nature, who is thus wont to tenderly reflect herself according to our moods, to unveil herself according to our needs, And all the longings for companionship, the longings for father and mother, which had throbbed so wearily in his heart were satisfied, though the moon did not tell him the peace, the stars they did not twinkle it, the high hills they did not chant it, neither did waving tree-top whisper it, nor glistening wave or flowing river murmur it, and yet, through them all, he seemed to catch a deep restful undertone of comfort, and he had smiled, even as he thought of the lonely graves, and the old blue chest, which were the only heritages left him by father or mother, in the places he called homes, for, more keenly than ever before, he felt that moonlight night, that his father's dying words of trust, "A Father of the Fatherless," his mother's oft-time repeated sentence, "A God of love," were a

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richer inheritance than gold or broad estate.

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ." It was a beautiful way to choose my name, he had thought, while in fancy he seemed to see the humble room, his gentle mother and the strong man his father, and himself, a helpless babe, yet even then, by their prayer of consecration, sealed by the sign of heirship, to the heavenly inheritance. Thinking of it, deep down in his heart, had sounded the promise, "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ," and softly Paul had whispered, "The cross of Christ, if I be looking toward it, let the world drift as it may, let speculations and theories run as high as they may, and surge, and roar, and whirl, around, all I have to do, is just to cling to the cross."

Thus it happened, that if as Mrs. Forbes thought, Paul came back, "soberer than he went away," sadder perchance, he came back richer too.

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II.

HAVE you ever noticed how a peculiar tenderness clusters around the *first* of any duplicated joy or sorrow of our lives? The first vacant place at home, the first empty seat at table, the first voice forever hushed, we all know that tears fall more plentifully over that first household grief, even if it be but a baby's grave, than ever they do over the deeper, more desolating sorrows of later years.

Unconsciously, we all bow down before it,—this claim of being *first*, all, from the king on his throne, who yields crown and sceptre to first born, to the lowly peasant, who watches the trembling steps of the first baby, with wondering love, no other little tottler ever calls forth,—and this is right, for while king and peasant may love the after-

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comers as well, it was the *first* who woke up the father's heart. Turning to the higher from the lower realm of affections and emotions, we find the first still asserts its sway. The first spring flower, we greet it with a smile of welcome, brighter than any later blossom brings, though the after growth unfolds beauties the spring blooms only hinted were to follow; and so too, about any work of our hands, heart, or mind, we never can feel twice the same towards its accomplishment, just as we never can be twice a care-free child, even though we keep a child-heart down to old age. Paul dimly felt this, as an hour after dark, he hurried through the dismal mist of a November evening toward the art exhibition, where for the first time, side by side with landscape and portrait, representation of nature and ideal vision of artist fancy, a picture of his own was to hang.

"Who will look at it," he wondered, thinking of the many pictures bearing the trace of master hands that were to be grouped on the same wall with his, and he linger-

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ed beneath a gas lamp, at a street corner, to read as he had done half a dozen times before that day, the old quotation Mr. Grey had once given him about unappreciated work.

There was another cause of excitement to Paul, which was, that Agnes Murray he knew, would be at the opening exhibition.

"Would she like his picture?" and his heart beat at that question more restlessly than it had done before. Then he thought of the other little picture which he had painted since they had parted, laying on every color, even the dark rock shades, with a smile, reflected perchance from the cloudless blue of the sky patch, with which he over arched the rock and the flower.

Perhaps it was a foolish way of testing it, but Paul had decided that evening should solve for him, not his feelings towards Agnes, but hers toward him, for, though over and over he had said to himself, "She does not love me," he wanted some outside thing to decide it.

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There were not many persons in the gallery when he entered, and he easily found his own picture, which never looked to him so small and insignificant as it did then. Turning away, he felt, "no one will ever look at it," and then, straightway his art-loving nature forgot his own work in the great enjoyment of gazing on the works of others.

But Paul was mistaken in thinking no one would look at his picture, for many paused before it, attracted they could hardly tell by what. It was simple in subject and detail, its chief charm, arising from its suggestiveness and the peculiar harmony of color, which pervaded it like odor does a rose. "A Summer Day," he had called it, and verily the mute canvas seemed to have caught the spirit of a quiet August noontime.

"It might fitly have been named 'Repose,'" said Agnes Murray, as she stood before it, an hour after Paul had taken his first look.

"Did you ever see a picture with such

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rest hovering over it?" she continued, "I wonder whether as he painted, Mr. Foster murmured to himself all the while, Bryant's Midsummer verse,

"But now a joy too deep for sound,
A peace no other season knows,
Hushes the heavens and wraps the ground,
The blessing of supreme repose.

There the hushed winds their Sabbath keep,
While a near hum from bees and brooks
Comes faintly, like the breath of sleep."

"You know the artist, I think," Agnes' companion asked, as she ceased.

"Know him—oh, yes!" she eagerly replied. And never thinking of the heart she was wounding, Agnes began to tell the group of listeners who gathered near to hear it, the story of Paul Foster's life.

She told it kindly, calling him her friend. And Paul—he stood close by, though she did not see him,—so close that he could not turn away as he longed to do, without pushing rudely through the circle of fair ladies and courteous gentlemen hearkening

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to Agnes, whose every word he distinctly heard.

"He is very poor," she began. "His father worked in a mill; his mother was a farmer's daughter. But I am sure she must have loved and been in sympathy with all beautiful things. His parents died when he was a mere lad, leaving him penniless. He came to the city when only sixteen to enter my uncle's engraving establishment, and there he has worked ever since, enduring, uncle says, more privations than I can even dream possible. Night after night he has worked to acquire knowledge, till now, not only of art, but of music, history and poetry, he talks with a comprehensiveness quite wonderful in one so entirely self-educated. And next week he sails for Europe, to undertake some copying for my uncle, and to pursue his dearly-loved profession abroad. Is it not a beautiful story of determination, all for the sake of picture-making?" she asked, lifting a glowing face to the gentleman on whose arm she leaned.

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"Certainly, one showing great perseverance," was the somewhat cold response, which a gray-headed artist interrupted by enquiring:

"Did you say he was quite young still?" And as Agnes nodded an affirmative, the veteran holder of brush and palette looked again at "The Summer Day," saying, "The young man shows much talent. He will make his way in the world without doubt."

"But, Agnes," asked a bright-eyed, jewel-bedecked lady, "why do you call him your friend?" And Paul bent forward to catch every word of the reply.

"Why!—oh, he has helped me so much, not only in my drawing, but in thinking, and—" And she left unsaid the deeper help he had given, adding, "He is so noble and good."

"But is he a gentleman?" again the jewel-bedecked lady queried.

"Yes!" and Agnes' tone was clear and calm. "I call him so most truly; though perhaps you would call him common, very

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common, for he wears patched boots and thread-bare coats now and then."

Just as she uttered these words the group of listeners simultaneously made way for a tall young man, an awkward youth to their eyes, who bowed low to Agnes as he passed, and a moment later the noiselessly-moving door leading from the gallery swung to, after Paul.

The outside air seemed cool and fresh to him, and for a brief minute he stood with uncovered head letting it blow about him. And then he walked on and on, noting in a certain way that the mist had changed to fast-falling rain, that the wind was cold. He heard, too, the striking of a clock from some church-tower, and the incessant rumbling of wheels, and city sounds. Yet, as these grew less, he did not miss them; and still he walked on and on, till he was far beyond the city streets, while all the time the rain continued to fall, the cold wind to blow; but he heeded them not.

It was long before he turned back, long

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before he could say, "It is better; it is no matter. Only a mill-hand's boy—what right have I to be a companion of hers." And before his eyes, chasing each other like red and yellow leaves that are swept up and down by an autumn wind, flitted the jeweled ladies and the polished gentlemen he had seen grouped about Agnes. And then—for never yet did human or spiritual love develop alike in two hearts—Paul suddenly felt conscious that, where an hour before had been—a great pain, a rebellious pain—that she was among the rich of the world, and he among the poor (a mill-hand's son, he repeated the words to himself,) a great sense of happiness had come, for she called me "her friend. She said I had helped her," he thought. And walking through the now almost deserted streets at the very stillest hour of the twenty-four, just between the midnight and the dawn, he spoke aloud for the first time the name,—Agnes,—linking it with a pleading prayer, that all good and joy might encircle her young life.

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Yet, when he stood, in the gray light, in his attic-room, he could not help, though he was in the full strength of early manhood, the falling of a tear on the little picture of the rock and flower, which he wrapt in soft paper, striking a light, that he might be sure he laid it in a safe place in the trunk already half packed, and which was not to be unpacked till he reached the far-away shore of sunny Italy.

And the picture, it fitted right into a vacant place beside the little slate with the crooked lines. So they lay close together, the rude drawing of his childhood, and the picture of his youth.

And Paul smiled as he looked at them—a sad smile—while he wondered, "What will the picture of my manhood be?"

But only the coming years could reply—the silent years, which ever refuse to lift the curtain that veils the future from our on-looking gaze.

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III.

THERE are some lives, that seem to fasten off every task they undertake, that never seem to leave a raveling thread, but like the skillful weaver, intertwine warp and woof firmly, one with the other, till they roll off from the shuttle, a finished measure, of gaily colored cloth or snowy linen. This gift of completion was Paul's, he never left half done any work he began, he never spoke a kind word to a needy child, but he followed it up with a kinder deed, so that his life was all the time helping to develop other lives. Though, he was ever very reserved, he was only a poor young man, who never seemed to have very much power, whose influence was quiet and unobtrusive.

Yet, in its results, his life was like the

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growth, that goes on down beneath the ocean waves, where the coral seekers find covering the rocks, "little forests of purple and white trees, each stalk resembling a pretty though leafless shrub, and bearing a delicate star-like flower, to which they are wont to attribute, wondrous power, and with which in ancient days, the Gauls adorned their shields and helmets, while the Romans wore these coral branches, as amulets and ornaments."

Paul's companions recognized, that while he was gentle and yielding, touch a principle and he became steadfast as flint, like the coral again, which though soft and pliable, beneath the friendly ocean waves, becomes hard on exposure to the first breath of uncongenial air.

After Paul had gone far away, many of them recognized too, that, it was through his influence some bright place shone on the helmet or shield of their faith, while from some remembered kind act of his, a star-like flower, whispering, "Go and do

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likewise," began to unfold its delicate leaves in their hearts. But, we are wandering from the day after the art exhibition.

It was Saturday, and on the following Monday, Paul expected to sail, so that not an hour of the brief work-time remaining was unemployed.

All the morning he spent with Mr. Gilbert, who had beside many directions for his work, business arrangements to settle. Paul could not be persuaded to accept in advance of his earnings, more than the amount absolutely needed, to defray his expenses, "I am used to being poor you know," he replied, with a playful smile, as his old employer urged upon him the taking of a larger sum.

Scarcely had his interview with Mr. Gilbert ended, before Mr. Elliott came, to congratulate him on the favorable notice, "A Summer Day" had received.

"It has been thought worthy of a paragraph in the morning paper," he said, and already it has found a purchaser, and he

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counted over a roll of bills which he handed to Paul.

Then followed an hour's pleasant talk, and the uttering of farewell words, mingled with advice from Mr. Gilbert and encouragement from Mr. Elliott. It was past noon when he left them, eager to accomplish some long cherished plans, which now that his picture had found a purchaser, were possible.

He walked quickly toward a marble yard, which was not far from Mrs. Forbes' house, and which he passed every night and morning, sometimes tarrying to look at the rough marble blocks, that were being chiseled into various shapes, some of monumental height, others, into emblematic forms, or simple tablets.

Familiar as he was with the place, he had soon selected two simple memorials, for the lonely graves, his "*home-spots*," which were unmarked now save by flowers and green grass.

Gently he laid his hand on the cold but

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pure surface of a marble cross, while he said, "Have this inscribed, 'God is love,'" answering, somewhat quickly, "nothing but those words," as the man receiving his order, asked twice, "What more did you say?" and then Paul, touched a plain slab, as he added, "Mark this with my father's name, Enoch Foster, who departed to be with Christ," and he wrote on the slip of paper the man handed him, the date of his father's death, while on the other side of the paper, he wrote, Mrs. Blake's address in Tompkinsville, and Dr. Miller's at W——, for they had promised, if the picture sold, and he was able to send the stones, they would see that they were carefully placed by the green mounds.

After this task was accomplished, and the purchasing of sundry packages, which Paul carried, the day was far spent.

He turned into a narrow street, and then up a rickety stairway which led into a desolate room, where he entered without knocking, for he was no stranger to the little

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sufferer lying on a comfortless straw bed in a corner of the wretched room.

It was Maggie, the lame girl, the child from whom he had been wont to buy violets, and who had learned to watch for his figure, not for the sake of the pennies he gave her so much as for the smile.

She had been growing weaker and weaker ever since the spring, when Paul, missing her from the hotel steps, had sought the dreary place which she called home! "She never can endure the cold of another winter," the doctor had said, and indeed, every time that Paul came, he noticed the little form had grown thinner, the little face whiter.

He had been often to see her during the past weeks, "though there is not much I can do for her," he had told Mrs. Forbes, who now and then remonstrated, when she saw Paul after his day's work going out again; and he would add, "If you could only see her face light up as it does, when I tell her of Christ, and of God our Father, you would not wonder that it rests me to go."

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Maggie knew Paul's step while he was still on the stairway, and almost before he had entered the room, she greeted him with a glad cry of welcome, exclaiming,

"Oh, Mr. Foster, such a beautiful thing has happened, I am going soon to be with Jesus in Heaven." And she replied to Paul's question, "How do you know that little Maggie?" with a beaming face, saying,

"Why, I asked Him and you said Jesus would give me what I ask for, so I know He will come soon."

Paul stood silent for several minutes, looking on the little child—who had spoken to the Lord Jesus.

She was a pitiful object to look at, with a poverty-pinched face, with uncombed hair, a neglected, deformed child, whose bed was a wretched bed, and yet, there was a radiance on her countenance which illumined it with something like beauty, for it bore the first impress of the angel-hood so soon to be hers, and which fell upon her, like a trailing cloud of glory, because she had spoken to

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Christ. Eagerly she continued, "I'm so glad He told it to me, and, I don't know how He did it; but, it came right into my heart, 'Maggie, I'm coming for ye soon,'" and she stretched her little hand, such a wasted little hand, out toward Paul, asking, "Arn't you glad too, Mr. Foster?"

"Yes, very glad," Paul replied, and he thought of the land where sorrow and want are unknown, and where the child would be before long, and then he sat down and told her the story his mother had told him when he was a little boy, of the green pastures, and the still waters. But most of all, he dwelt on the gladness that Maggie would know *there*, because all the time she would be with Christ, the Shepherd who "carries the lambs in His bosom."

While Paul talked to the child, holding her hand in his, the shadows had deepened in the room, where it grew dark early; and yet it was light to Paul, for almost it seemed as though the Lord Christ, of whom he spoke, was there in visible form,

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close beside him in the dingy room, so close, almost he felt as though his heart were throbbing against the Master's heart, as though he were clinging to a loving warm Hand of help and comfort, outstretching from the Heavenly Land. And, was He not there?

The child had gone to sleep while Paul was speaking, which noticing, he gently disengaged the clasp of her hand, noiselessly placing the packages he had brought by her bedside, where she could see them when she awoke, and he was happy, thinking how glad Maggie would be, thinking how she would look and smile at the picture he had drawn for her, of a shepherd carrying a tired lamb safely in his strong arms, for Paul knew the child could read the meaning of the picture.

While he was thus occupied Maggie's mother had entered. Turning Paul saw her, and he slipped into the woman's hand a crumpled bill, saying, "Give her all the comforts you can, and tell her, I left a good-bye;

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tell her we will meet again in our Father's house;" and the woman repeated the message that she might remember every word to tell her sick child. She wondered at it too, but not so much as she wondered when (for spite the patched boots and threadbare coat, Paul was a real gentleman to her,) he stooped and kissed the wan face of the little child,—the child who had talked with his Lord Christ.

And then, hastily he left the room, which he never entered again.

Only two or three more visits had he to make. A few minutes spent with the old woman from whom he had so long bought his lunch, a quiet half hour with the minister of the little chapel, these were all, except a hasty call of farewell on Mrs. Murray and Agnes. A call in which neither by word or look, did he give evidence of the struggle of the bygone night; indeed, their congratulations on the success of his picture were so calmly received, Agnes thought him almost indifferent, and as he rose to say good-bye, she lifted her eyes earnestly to his

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face, but not a tell-tale shadow or smile were reflected there, not even the faint trace of the look she had seen the first day of their meeting, and the afternoon when they had walked the flower bordered path, (and—Is human nature always contradictory? while she was glad the look was not on his face, she was sorry too.)

"All the youngness has gone from him, mother," she said, as Paul left the room, "he seemed so grave," and a shadow overgloomed Agnes for a moment, but only for a moment, for new visitors were ushered in, almost before Paul had gone. He lingered on the doorstep for a second, which Benjamin who had learned to feel kindly to the drawing teacher noticed, and respectfully asked, "Is there any thing you want Mr. Foster, any thing I can do for you, sir?"

Paul's voice was tremulous as he replied, "I would like to go into the picture gallery for a minute." And Benjamin led the way saying, "It will be almost dark in there by this time."

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But Paul did not heed the words, neither did he linger longer than to take one look at the picture of the kneeling maiden, with the earnest eyes, which he saw plainly though the light was dim.

And then with a kind word to Benjamin, the door of Agnes Murray's home closed behind Paul for the last time, just as the broken latched door, leading from little Maggie's home had swung too after him, only an hour before. He was very tired, his heart ached drearily, and he had to pay for the intense effort he had made to seem calm during his call on Agnes. For a little while he was faint—for he was young—and the pulling down of the dream-castles youth builds is a wearisome task, even to the bravest heart.

But when he reached his boarding-house he had regained his wonted quietness of manner, though his heart sank again as he entered his room. It looked so desolate, the walls stript of the sketches, his early drawings with which he had covered them;

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the book-shelf empty too. Wearily he leaned his head on the sill of the sky-light window remembering the hours he had gazed from it, looking up to the stars, but not many could he see when after a little while he looked forth, for clouds were gathering, "but I know they are there," he thought, "just as I know, though I do not feel Him near as I did in Maggie's room, Christ is just as close to me now as he was then." Presently Paul remembered Mrs. Forbes, whom he knew all day long had been looking forward to a quiet talk with him that evening,—a talk of their Father in Heaven, and yet it cost him a struggle to leave the window and the silent companionship of the few stars, which were hidden one second by the quickly passing clouds, and the next were shining as brightly as though no cloud had ever eclipsed their radiance.

Going down stairs, Paul found Mrs. Forbes in her now tidy kitchen, busy with thread and needle. As he entered she drew a chair up to the table for him, saying, "I was expecting you."

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"I am too tired to talk much," he replied "shall I read instead?"

A smile was her reply, and the bringing of *the Book*, from its place on the mantel shelf.

Paul turned the leaves irresolutely, he wanted comfort, he wanted rest, which he knew he could find, and yet, he hesitated where to read.

"Have you ever thought," he said, "'how comfort seems to flow almost equally and yet in different ways from the Old and New Testaments?'" and not waiting for more of a reply than Mrs. Forbes' look gave, he continued, "the Old strengthens me, revealing God our Father as the Creator and upholder of all things; just thinking of it seems to raise us so above our own individual sorrows, it is such a grand representation, and yet, this Lord is mindful of us all, listen;" and he read,

"I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of a low dungeon;" and Paul paused at those words, for he thought of the prison house of doubt, in which he had been a captive so

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long, and Mrs. Forbes' eyes grew dim with tears, for her memory turned to dark hours in her past. But, as Paul recommenced the reading they both smiled, for the next verses were,

"Thou hast heard my voice, hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near, in the day that I called upon thee, thou saidst, Fear not." "Tell me," asked Mrs. Forbes, as he ceased reading, "What's the way you think comfort flows from the New Testament?" and Paul read, "Come unto me, ye weary, and heavy laden," and the "Let not your heart be troubled," chapter, then he said, "these tell you my answer, for when reading them, does not all your sorrow and disappointment seem to fall into shadow, Mrs. Forbes? losing if not all their oppressiveness, certainly all of their bitterness."

"The infinite self-sacrificing love of Christ, blended in with the example He sets us, it seems to soothe away every pain of heart, and mind, almost, of body, as we

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read the gospel pages." And Paul closed the Book saying, "I was tired when I began, but now I am rested," and he bade Mrs. Forbes "good-night," laughing at her words, for she said,

"What have you done to yourself Mr. Foster? you seem years older than you did yesterday."

What had he done? What do any of us do, to bring the something into look and manner, that heralds more surely than recorded date in family Bible can, "he is a man now"—"she a woman?" It matters not whether we can solve the question, if only like Paul—

> "By inward sense, by outward signs,
> God's presence still the heart divines;"

If only—

> "Through deepest joy of Him we learn,
> In sorest grief to Him we turn,
> And reason stoops its pride to share
> The child-like instinct of a prayer."

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IV.

DID you ever wake up early, very early, before the sun had risen, when the eastern horizon was glowing with violet and golden hues, when the sky above was solemnly peaceful, and yet glorified "by even the intent of holding the day-glory?"

Did you ever look out on broad fields and meadows, when all the flowers and grass blades were glistening with starry dew-drops,—when the air was jubilant with song of birds and all nature glad? If you know this morning-time, you know too, how the after coming hours dim the dawn glow, rob away the glistening dew drops from flower and leaf, and hush the bird songs. And yet, how powerless the touch of change that comes with mid-day, and westward moving sun, is to steal one ray of brightness from the

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memory of the dewy freshness of morning, which stays with us, like the recollection of sweet odors from violets and lilies, which we gathered when we were children; for, it is impossible to lose the memory of the golden hour clasp, by which night is linked to day, and to which our hearts turn when tired and disheartened, the scorching sun rays of noon beat upon us, or the rude tossings of this earth life shadow us.

It was thus Paul ever remembered his first waking hour of the cloudless Sabbath that followed the clouded sky of Saturday. It will be such a peaceful "rest-day," he thought, and he planned going to church in the morning, and spending the afternoon with little Maggie, and saying to the child the good-bye which he had left with her mother.

But all Paul's plans were changed, for as the early bells which rang an hour before the service time, began from a hundred church towers, to send out their glad peals, Mrs. Forbes knocked at his door and handed him a

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note, which proved to be a hastily written word from the captain of the sailing vessel, on which he had engaged passage. It said, "on account of the fair wind, the Sea Spray would draw anchor at noon that day rather than waiting for the next, and that Mr. Foster must be on board by eleven o'clock."

A busy hour of preparation followed, and then a hasty parting from Mrs. Forbes and one or two of his friends, who lodged in her house, and Paul, just as the bells were ringing again, went forth to begin once more a life among strangers.

Before nightfall the ship was ploughing along through the deep blue waters, while the distant line of the home-land grew fainter every passing hour. Even the low-lying farthest seaward-reaching shores faded at last, while gently the sun sank lower and and lower, till, by-and-by, it slipped away out of sight, and, with never a thing between, the stretch of water met the blue sky.

"We are out of sight of land," the cap-

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tain said. "A good omen, Mr. Foster, we sailors think it, to set sail on Sunday," and he lingered near Paul for a few minutes' chat.

After that, Paul sat long on the deck, so long that when he entered the cabin below darkness had settled down over the ocean.

It seemed so strange to him, the thought that yesterday at that hour he was sitting reading to Mrs. Forbes, and now, with only the bridge of a day between, he was sailing away over the broad Atlantic. He closed his eyes and listened to the splashing of the waves against the vessel's side. It was a pleasant sound to him, fraught with imagination-waking pictures, and for an hour or more he lay quite still, listening to the song of the sea-waves, and then he thought of the ringing church-bells to which he had hearkened at morning.

"I am glad," he said, "they were the last land-music I heard. I am glad the echo of their chimes has come with me out to sea." And he fell into wondering whether the

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soul, passing from earth to the heavenly world, carried with it the memory of the last sound that fell on the mortal ear. He wondered, too, whether the changes of life were wont to come thus suddenly. Would that last great change from this life into the next come thus? Was it just the passing from "one room into the next"—passing from the dark room of sin and trouble into the light and endless joy of the upper room, in the Father's house, that many-mansioned Home?

"Many mansions"—Paul pondered over the words. Did they mean many in number, or many in variety? Was there a great house open to all who entered through the Door, Christ, or were there special houses prepared for *each one?*

Other thoughts passed through his mind, thoughts that were prayers, in which Agnes Murray's name found a place close beside the name of little Maggie, the deformed child; for as he prayed, the barrier of social position faded and grew dim, like the receding line of the vanished shore.

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But it was Agnes' name he murmured last, for as the soul climbed the "silver-shining stair that leads to God's great treasure-house," there was no blessing or no boon stored there that for her he did not ask. And as he prayed, he uttered, "that none in heaven or earth might hinder it, that other Name," the strong Name, of Him who said, "Ask what ye will, in my name." And then, like a tired child, Paul, even while he prayed, fell asleep; and all night long the ship sailed on over the broad waters.

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V.

THE days which followed were full of enjoyment to Paul, whose beauty-loving soul was thrilled by the wonders and glories the sea revealed to him every hour.

He could not tell which he liked best, the morning or the night, when it sometimes seemed as "though the ocean were intent upon giving back the floods of light which it had received during the day." For after the sun had sank beneath the horizon, a new light would dawn upon the waves, shining in crowds of star-like points, which studded the ship's way, and broke into a thousand sparkling gems, which were scattered broadcast as the waves dashed against the vessel's sides. Or now and then, when the sea was

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calm, like millions of twinkling stars they looked, quivering with numerous lights.

Paul never wearied of sitting on deck, watching it all. A peculiar sense of peace the breadth of the far-reaching out-look gave him. The varying colors of sky and ocean were, too, a perpetual source of delight, brilliant as they were sometimes, dazzling almost to his eyes :

> "Yet when did aught beneath the open sky
> Seem harsh or violent?"

Picture after picture he planned, those days—of sunrises, when the rosy clouds seemed resting on the golden waves—of sunsets, when tender lights vied and blended in with recollections of the fading brightness. And other sketches he planned, in which moonlight gleamed in between white sails and shone on the foam-capped waves, while it traced with a silvery touch the outline of fleecy clouds, sailing over the upper blue tranquilly as he sailed over the fathomless ocean.

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His pencil was constantly busy during the calm hours of his voyage, sometimes he strove, too, to catch the look of the storm-tossed waters, when the crested waves with the white foam scattered over them looked like snow fields. And when dizzy from the rolling of the ship, Paul could not use his pencil, he would turn down leaf after leaf in the Bible, where were pictured "them that go down to the sea in ships, that see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep, the stormy wind which lifteth up the waves thereof."

The verses, Paul thought, will serve as hints and reminders when on land I try to recollect the "look" of it all.

His childish belief, that the stars were heavenly gazers, tenderly watching his way, seemed very real to him those nights; for the stars seemed so near. And sometimes, when it was very calm, he caught the reflection of their twinkling in the still waters, through which the ship glided so quietly hardly a ripple it seemed to stir.

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Almost regretfully he heard the sailors talk of nearing port. Almost sorrowfully he heard, some five weeks after they set sail, the shout—"Land ahead!" It had been such a peaceful time, a time when heaven had seemed so near, he could not but be sorry to have it over.

The captain was a friendly man, warm-hearted, as sailors are apt to be, as though in some mystic way the generous looks they take at ocean and sky broadened their hearts.

The sailors too, had after the first few days, regarded Paul with special interest, for his picture-making appealed to their story-loving natures, and many were the long yarns, the wonderful sea tales they told him, during the idle days, when for a week they were becalmed off the Banks. They felt also an unexplainable reverence, which is often the case among the rough and unlearned, for the young man who cared so much for beautiful sights, and they liked to point out to him a far-away cloud,

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or peculiar color in the deep sea-green of the waves, for they all felt an honest pride of ownership in the broad ocean and the sky.

One, a weather-beaten old man—whose sun-browned arms, were tattooed with hieroglyphic signs of foreign lands, whose face was seamed with marks of exposure to wind and wave, and whose heart was overgrown with tangled weeds of superstitious fears, and strange beliefs, picked up from the many coasts in which he had harbored—grew gentle as a child, while he listened to Paul reading one Sunday to a sick sailor lad, and yet all Paul read were the verses written in Luke fifteenth. That very evening when Paul was looking up at the stars, the old man approached him saying, in a smothered voice,

"Would ye mind telling me, low-like, so my comrades don't hear, them verses ye read this morning, about the sheep? I reckon I know the first of 'em, but 's the last I want to hear, about the findin' on 't."

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And Paul whispered,

"And when he had found it, he laid it on his shoulder rejoicing; and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

"Them's wonderful words," the old man said after a silence; and, he lifted his eyes up to the stars, at which Paul was gazing; and then in a tone lower, gentler if possible than it was before, Paul whispered,

"Look higher than the stars, if you would see the Shepherd." And the old man knew Paul's meaning, and, who can tell—it takes such a minute for the eye of faith to find Him, our Lord Christ—what the old sailor saw that night!

He did not tarry for more words with Paul, and there was need for no more; indeed, he hardly spoke to him again, till on the very day of landing, when he brought a curious shell, banded by rainbow colors, saying,

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"Take this Mr. Foster, as a kind o' keep-sake of an old tar, who won't forget *Him*, you know," and he looked up as he warmly shook Paul's hand, and hastily he turned away, whistling a sailor's tune, without waiting for a word from Paul, whose voyage was ended—who an hour later trod the soil of a foreign land.

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VI.

WE must not linger to follow Paul in his journeyings through strange lands and among stranger peoples. Enough to tell, that every hour came laden to him with new sensations, and new revelations, of nature's beauty, and art's interpretations of that beauty; enough to tell, that the days sped on rapid wing, till they numbered weeks, since he bade good-bye to the friendly captain and sailors of the good ship, "Sea Spray," before he took his seat, in a crowded diligence which was just starting from Civita Vecchia for Rome.

Only by an effort did he control the excitement which thrilled his heart, as he realized, he would so soon, enter the city of his dreams, for while he was peculiarly alive to the truth, that "*all things*, which

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surround us, contain in themselves matter for contemplation, for enjoyment and delight both for the mind and feelings," he was sensitive to the dignity, sacredness, and mystery, with which the records of the past, invest every stone of the city toward which he journeyed, and the rolling slopes of the Campagna, over which the coach rumbled along so indifferently, were to him "thought wakeners."

He was glad the sunlight rested over it all —glad the tall, skeleton grasses waved in the breeze, blowing over the blue waters; for he felt as though they were nodding in greeting to him, just as he felt the waves that played around the black, jagged, half-sunken rocks near the shore were smiling a welcome, as they broke into foamy wavelets. Even the lonely watch-towers, gray with age, did not look dreary so brightly the sun shone.

And when their way struck inward, when the country grew every minute increasingly desolate and lonely, Paul found a

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charm in its weird desolation; for, while the silence, the sadness of it, and the moaning of the wind, were fraught to him with echoing whispers, they were not mournful echoes.

The day was nearing its close, when from the summit of a slowly-ascended hill-slope, towering above the city, which was yet hidden, he caught a glimpse of St. Peter's lofty dome; and then again the coach rumbled over the desolate Campagna.

As they approached the city, the road became more populated, till at last they halted for a second. And a minute after, Paul knew that he was in Rome, within the shadow of the Cathedral's dome, golden with the rays of sunset glory; within sound of the clanging of the bell from its belfry; within sight of the groups of gayly-dressed men, women, and children, wandering forth in the great Piazza, where the old Egyptian obelisk in the centre "pointed its lean finger to the sky" like a warning sentinel from some by-gone time, and where the fountains,

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as though laughing at age, played and waved their sprayey columns to and fro, till they broke into a thousand sparkling drops.

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VII.

BEAUTIFUL days followed; days when Paul wandered for hours amid the falling pillars, crumbling arches, and ruined temples; days when his heart beat high as he stood with uplifted gaze before the work of Painter and Sculptor; nights when the art, the beauty, and the age surrounding him seemed like a dream, from which in the morning he would awake.

But, why linger to describe the wonders and beauty of Rome—truly called, "The Eternal City"—in its exhaustless treasures of art and history, with which we are all familiar, through printed page and "painted canvas."

Paul roved from place to place, heedless of the work that on the following Monday

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he must commence (he could not before, as the studio he was to occupy would not be vacated till then). He presented the letter of introduction Mr. Gilbert had given him to the gentleman who had selected the pictures which he was to copy.

He was an elderly artist, a simple, kind-hearted man, who immediately was attracted by Paul's youth, as well as by the familiar language he spoke (for Paul's use of the foreign tongue was so imperfect he clung to the dear old Saxon words when he found any one who could understand him), and he took much interest in directing him to places of special note during those leisure days, as well as in finding for him a studio nest, in the group of streets full of studios, near the neighborhood of the Piazza-Barbarini.

It was an upper room, a tiny nook of a place, so far up that not many of the visitors who constantly sought the studios below, to make purchases, or to watch the progress of unfinished pictures, would ever find their

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way up to him, Paul thought, which at first made but little difference, as for months he was busy copying.

Something of a home feeling seemed to belong to the little place from the first moment he entered it. He thought, perhaps, it came from being so in the midst of studios and art-lovers; for sculptors and painters, men and women, from many nations, were all clustered together there, working at their chosen profession.

Or perhaps Paul thought, "It may seem home-like because it is so high up." And he looked out at the blue sky, bending over the great city as tenderly as it over-arched his father and mother's graves, in the distant land of his birth.

And—for Paul was young—he thought, too, the same blue sky is bending over Agnes Murray. And this thought would win a smile to his lips, where smiles played not over-much after he began work in Rome; for it was a wearisome life he led, a life of hard work. But when the year after

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he left America came to a close, he had completed the last copy for Mr. Gilbert, and cancelled the last dollar of his indebtedness, and now he said to himself, "I am free. No longer need I feel like a bird singing" (for it was singing to Paul, just the handling of brush and palette) "in a cage, powerless to escape beyond the bars of prescribed work," and he thought almost with pity of the gay-plumaged songsters who were prisoners, spite their songs and gilded cages.

It was a spring day of the following year, when one bright morning, Paul shouldered his knapsack, color-box, and sketching-case, and locked the door of his studio, which he did not expect to open for many weeks.

Thus he started forth, with the sun shining about him, while violets perfumed the air and "daisies snowed the meadows," to wander all through the summer days by the calm waters of the Mediterranean, and far beyond out into the country of snow-capped mountains and flowery vales, through lands which were beautiful as the song of a poet.

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Paul never felt once, through all those summer days, the cold pressure of want. His little pocket-book was always full. For many and many were the sketches of cypress or pine, of distant mountain, or near landscape, that tourists eagerly purchased from the young man, who never asked them to buy his sketches, and yet gladly parted with them when asked.

So it happened, that when the summer ended, and Paul returned to Rome, he brought with him a goodly pile of coins, honest-earned coins, the fruit of his "true to Nature" sketches.

And here, let those of our readers who have turned the pages of this little book for the story written in it, leave it; for soon after Paul Foster re-entered his studio, life —the real life which runs like a thread beneath our tale, pressed heavily upon him, so heavily, that shadows darkened with every passing day of the winter, till at last they were dispelled by the dawn of—another spring.

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VIII.

FOR a month before Christmas, the streets of Rome were crowded, the sound of music was heard from morning till nightfall, but only echoing notes of songlets, or far away strains of harpists found their way up to Paul's room. Not once did he hear the sound of a stranger's tread on the narrow stair-way leading to it, and yet, he toiled on, never losing from his heart the hope of a coming purchaser for the picture so nearly completed. But no one came,—and the handful of coins he had left, when the summer tour ended, grew less and less every day.

"You must change your style," the young money-making artists said; "you must bow to the popular taste. All these visitors throng-

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ing the city are not keen-eyed art lovers. Paint for them, if you would make money; the few connoisseurs will never look beyond the far-famed studios below," and the young men laughed at Paul, as gaily they added,

"What are we painters, but men free to chase the shadows of our fancy?" But Paul read a deeper meaning in picture making than ever his gay-hearted companions dreamed, — a meaning which made him scorn to slight, by superficial touch, or false tint, the work he undertook.

He felt it such a solemn thing, this striving to convey knowledge to his fellow-men through pictures, and, the intentness of observation which had grown with every year of his life, made it impossible for him to paint a beautiful picture, and yet one that even in the coloring of way-side grass or commonest field flower, was not true to the nature it symbolized.

"Be true," he said to himself often, "even though it take longer to finish my picture— even though," — and he sighed a weary

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sigh, as he lifted the worn leather pocket-book, which grew lighter and lighter every day, while—his face grew thinner and paler, —his sleep more restless and broken.

But at last, upon his easel stood the finished picture,—a picture in which the warm hues of an Italian evening were heightened by the brilliant tints of opening flowers,—a picture over which lights tender as the rays of dawn seemed to hover,—a picture full of pathos and spiritual meaning,—and yet, it was but a simple composition of a subject that has often been worked into pictures, by artists of many countries.

A wayside cross, about which

> "Nature of herself, as if to trace
> The emblems use, had trailed around its base
> The blue significant forget-me-not."

Before the cross, lay the broken shaft of a fluted column, which with the massive Corinthian capital, might have been part of some magnificent temple. Beyond the cross making the background of the picture, were blue hills and verdant vales, a "sunny world,

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fresh and fair," on which the eye rested lovingly, as it looked beyond the ruined fragments of the temple, the work of man's hands, looked beyond, even the bright flowers,—beyond, to the calm of the "everlasting hills," toward which no pathway opened, except the narrow path that led close beside the cross, the shadow of which stretched over it,—far over,—till it was lost in the light enfolding the peaceful hills.

Did Paul say to himself as he painted those far away hills, the verse his mother taught him, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people;" and that other verse, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help?"

Did he think as he painted the cross, of Him, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world?"

Did he, with heart glad, as river that runs from shadow into sunlight, whisper to himself, "The cross, it is precious?"

We cannot tell, for no heart can read

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another's secrets; but Paul's face was lighted up with happy smiles as he looked on his finished picture.

The following day, and for many a day after, he wandered through the crowded streets, going from place to place, where picture dealers were wont to purchase at half their value the wares young painters offered.

But, not one could Paul find who would buy his picture,—and the Christmas season passed, and still it was unsold,—and, the pocket-book, it had grown very light, very empty.

At last, when all efforts had failed, when hope began to leave him, he wrote to Mr. Gilbert's friend, who was absent from Rome, —but—weeks went by,—and no answer came. What could he do? he was a stranger in a strange land, to whom could he turn for help? Once, he sought the studios on the lower floors, he asked the artists occupying them, "Did they know of any purchaser for his picture?"—and not looking at the

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pale-faced young man making the request, only noticing his voice was calm and steady, they replied, "No, we have too many of our own, unsold."

And, after these rebuffs Paul could not go again, for he was proud and sensitive, a New England youth who felt "better starve than beg." Yet, there were kind-hearted men, tender women, in those studios below.

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IX.

SO the days went on, — was it strange that there came a time when a great darkness fell over Paul's soul. Was it strange? that he called aloud, as he looked at the finished picture, which no one would buy, "Has it been worth it all?"

And, he did not ask what prompted him, but, he stood beside it on the easel, — the picture of his youth, — the dreary rock and the solitary flower—and then he brought the little slate, with the crooked lines, and he left them standing together, those pictures of his childhood, youth, and manhood, while he went out into the streets, the dark streets, for it was night, and there it met him again, the question, "Has it been worth it all?" and he was cold, he was hungry, he was young, it was a hard ques-

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tion to meet and answer, and the night was far spent before he had fought and conquered it, the enemy, that had come in with the hunger, and the cold, and the disappointed hope,—the enemy, that had stolen like an armed man into the citadel of his faith.

It was early morning when Paul entered his studio again, when he stood before the pictures once more and softly whispered, "A Father of the fatherless," "God is love," and then he seemed to hear, repeated by a voice not his own, the question, "Has it been worth it all," and, like the murmur of waves rippling on the shore of some "low-lying beautiful land," like the lighting up of midnight dark, by dawn of day, he thought he heard the sound of many voices, singing in reply, "Yes, worth it all," while before him, like the shifting clouds of a summer sky, passed in quick succession the memory of his life, and he felt as though he were a child again, a child wondering, could he when a man dig deep enough to find the beautiful colors?

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Had he found them?

He felt as though he were a boy, longing to climb the hill-top, that he might look over and see "what was on the other side."

Had he climbed it?

And then, his pictures, colors, beautiful colors, faded and grew dim. Was their work ended?

But the voices, they went on singing, and one he thought, like little Maggie's, gently repeated, "I am at home now, with Christ,' while another, like the old sailor's, hummed over and over, "Rejoice, rejoice, the Shepherd has found a sinner repentant," and another sang, in the tune Mrs. Forbes used to sing, "I was weary, but I am resting now, resting in Christ," and then louder and sweeter than all, he heard Agnes, singing the glad song, "He was my friend, he helped me," and Paul knew the help meant "he told me of Christ."

And again Paul whispered, but very low this time, "Has it been worth it all?" And the room seemed full of music, like perfume

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of incense, waved in golden censer, as the voices chorused, "Yes, worth it all, for you have done it from love to Him, our Lord Christ."

And Paul knew this was a vision, that came perhaps, because he was weak and faint—so faint, that he groped his way toward the table, across which he folded his arms, leaning his head on them; but first he opened the Bible for it was light in the room—the sun was up—as he read the verse, "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ," and the sun went on shining, all day long.

It was high noon, when up the narrow stairway came the footfalls Paul had listened for so long, but, they were too late for him to hear them.

It was the artist, Mr. Gilbert's friend, who had returned to Rome only the night before, and who had hastened with a purchaser to Paul's studio. Once, twice, they knocked at the door, but no voice called, "Come in."

And, gently they pushed it open, they

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stood on the threshold, they looked in, they saw the easel, and the three pictures, they saw the sunlight falling aslant the room, lighting up the central picture, the cross, and the peaceful hills, they saw the table, where lay the pocket-book, so light, so empty. where lay the open *Book*, they saw Paul, with bowed head, and folded arms.

And softly they said,

"Hush! he is asleep."

Yes, they were right, Paul slept—and they had come too late to wake him.

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X.

THE next day, the little studio was to rent. The next day, within the shadow of the ancient city, the seven-hilled city, a new grave had been made.

The next day when "bread was no longer needed," Paul's genius had been recog nized, and when soon after his "government made a sale of his effects, every bit of a sketch, or study, or unfinished picture, brought so high a price, that his companions in the art-struggle, could only carry away the smallest souvenir; his brushes, a scrap of drawing, and even his old clothes brought a price."

So, he was crowned, in the city of art, by art-lovers, an artist. Had it come too late? had it been won at too costly a price?

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"No life—

Can be pure in its purpose, and strong in its strife,
And all life not be purer and stronger thereby.
The spirits of just men made perfect on high,
The army of martyrs who stand by the Throne
And gaze into the Face that makes glorious their own,
Know this surely, at last. Honest love, honest sorrow,
Honest work for the day, honest hope for the morrow,
Are these worth nothing more than the hand they
make weary,
The heart they have saddened, the life they leave dreary?
Hush! the sevenfold heavens to the voice of the spirit
Echo: He that over-cometh shall all things inherit."

THE END.

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